

COYOTE UGLY® LIBRARIAN: A PARTICIPANT OBSERVER EXAMINATION OF
KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION IN REALITY TV

Haley K. Holmes, B.A., M.A.

Dissertation Prepared for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

May 2007

APPROVED:

Brian C. O'Connor, Major Professor
Elizabeth Figa, Committee Member
Ben Levin, Committee Member
Herman L. Totten, Dean of the School of
Library and Information Sciences
Sandra L. Terrell, Dean of the Robert B.
Toulouse School of Graduate Studies

Holmes, Haley K. *Coyote Ugly® librarian: A participant observer examination of knowledge construction in reality TV*. Doctor of Philosophy (Information Science), May 2007, 176 pp., 6 tables, 20 figures, references, 54 titles.

Reality TV is the most popular genre of television programming today. The number of reality television shows has grown exponentially over the last fifteen years since the premier of *The Real World* in 1992. Although reality TV uses styles similar to those used in documentary film, the “reality” of the shows is questioned by critics and viewers alike.

The current study focuses on the “reality” that is presented to viewers and how that “reality” is created and may differ from what the participants of the shows experience. I appeared on two reality shows, *Faking It* and *That’s Clever*, and learned a great deal as a participant observer. Within the study, I outline my experience and demonstrate how editing changed the reality I experienced into what was presented to the viewers. O’Connor’s (1996) representation context web serves as a model for the realities created through reality television.

People derive various benefits from watching reality TV. Besides the obvious entertainment value of reality TV, viewers also gather information via this type of programming. Viewers want to see real people on television reacting to unusual circumstances without the use of scripts. By surveying reality TV show viewers and participants, this study gives insight into how real the viewers believe the shows are and how authentic they actually are. If these shows are presented as reality, viewers are probably taking what they see as historical fact. The results of the study indicate more must be done so that the “reality” of reality TV does not misinform viewers.

Copyright 2007

by

Haley K. Holmes

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people who I would like to thank for their support and encouragement during this long process.

Thank you to my committee chair, Brian O'Connor, for inspiring me to begin and to complete the program. All of my "faking," I learned from you.

Thank you also to my committee members, Elizabeth Figa and Ben Levin, for your enlightening suggestions and for teaching courses that led me to this topic.

Thank you to the participants of the study. Without your responses I would not have learned so much. Special thanks to Jennifer, Irene, and Chris for the phone interviews.

Thank you Catherine Gray for our discussions on reality and for continuing to encourage me to think beyond what I can see.

To my personal librarian, Lisa Brown, thank you for helping me locate those difficult to find articles. Your expertise was invaluable.

Thank you mom and dad for supporting my education, my foray into reality TV, and my crazy aspirations.

And lastly, my heartfelt thanks to Stephanie Tourk for your patience and for everything else.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Introduction	1
Framework	5
Purpose of this Study	14
Research Significance	14
Method	15
Summary	16
Definition of Terms	17
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	18
Introduction	18
Documentary Film	20
Documentary and Reality TV	23
History of Reality Television	25
Media's Impact on Society	30
Reality Television's Growing Popularity	31
Reality in Reality Television	34
Reality Television and Society	41
Reality Television Viewers	45
Reality Television Participants	47
Summary	48
3. PARTICIPANT/OBSERVER EXPERIENCE	49
Introduction	49
Faking It	50

	That's Clever	83
	Summary.....	84
4.	METHOD	85
	Introduction	85
	Research Design.....	85
	Population	86
	Surveys	86
	In-depth Interviews	87
	Sample Size	87
	Surveys	88
	Part 1: Television Viewers Survey Questionnaire.....	88
	Part 2: In-depth Interviews.....	98
	Pilot Test	98
	Survey Administration	98
	Data Analysis	99
	Survey Questionnaires	99
	In-depth Interviews	99
	Research Questions.....	99
	Summary.....	100
5.	DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS.....	101
	Research Design.....	101
	Population	101
	Reality TV Viewers	101
	Reality TV Participants	102
	Data Analysis	103
	Reality TV Viewers	103
	Reality TV Participants	113
	Open-ended questions	118
	In-depth Interviews	122
	Summary.....	123
6.	DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.....	124

Findings	124
Results	125
Surveys	125
In-depth interviews	128
Implications	128
Limitations	129
Sampling	129
Survey	130
Recommendations	131
Conclusion	131
APPENDICES	139
REFERENCES.....	172

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
1. Faking It Shooting Schedule.....	78
2. Faking It Footage used in Episode	79
3. Filming Schedule vs. Final Production, Part 1	80
4. Filming Schedule vs. Final Production, Part 2	81
5. Scenes Shot vs. Order Shown.....	82
6. Shows Viewers Watch and # of Times Each is Mentioned in Surveys	104

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
1. O'Connor's representation context web.....	11
2. Adapted representation context web	12
3. Filming at the University of North Texas Library Annex.....	53
4. Arriving in New Orleans with Chantel (left) and Tara (right)	56
5. Dancing on the bar for the first time with Tara	61
6. Shooting B-roll	62
7. During the makeover	65
8. After the makeover	65
9. Outside Coyote Ugly® during the anniversary party.....	67
10. Final flaring lesson with Bill	71
11. Age of subjects who took viewer survey.....	102
12. Results for Question 11 (viewers).....	108
13. Results for Question 12 (viewers).....	109
14. Results for Question 14 (viewers).....	111
15. Results for Question 10 (participants)	114
16. Results for Question 11 (participants)	115
17. Results for Question 12 (participants)	115
18. Results for Question 14 (participants)	116
19. Results for Question 15 (participants)	117
20. Results for Question 20 (participants)	117

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Documentation through the use of pictorial material has many pitfalls and a warning should be sounded before motion pictures are employed to prove a point or to establish a fact.” (McDonald, 1942, p. 88)

“Viewers have only the physically present document to decode. The structure of that document influences viewers’ understanding. The document is likewise shaped by what is left on the editing room floor – material to which the viewer generally has no access.” (O’Connor, 2001, p. 1)

Introduction

Reality TV is the most popular genre on television today. According to Wikipedia (n.d.), an online encyclopedia written by the public, “reality television is a genre of television programming which presents supposedly unscripted dramatic or humorous situations, documents actual events, and features ordinary people instead of professional actors” (Reality TV, n.d.). Television grew out of motion pictures, and reality TV is loosely based on the documentary style of filmmaking. It has grown from *The Real World* on MTV to shows on every network. How real these shows are is a question that has been asked by both critics and audiences. Participants are often put in extraordinary circumstances, coached by directors, and the “reality” is further influenced by editing techniques. One means of answering the reality question is to ask people who have been on the shows. The bigger question may be: does it matter if the shows are real or not?

“The entertainment and electronic media is arguably the most pervasive force in American society today” (Valenti, 2000, p. 3). Television has shaped society to such an extent that even copycat violence is often attributed to movies and television (Valenti, 2000). Many children gain their first knowledge about people of other ethnicities, religions, and cultures through television and film. This is problematic considering Valenti’s (2000) finding that, in 1997, 15.7 percent of characters on prime time television were ethnic minorities, while minorities comprised 25.4 percent of the total United States population at that time. The media is awash in stereotypes, the most common of which involve gender, race, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and physique. Of course, the driving force behind the entertainment industry is profit. Even television news departments are under pressure to be more entertaining. Journalists are cast according to their personalities and ratings rather than their education or knowledge (Valenti, 2000).

The expansion of reality TV shows is due at least in part to the fact that they are relatively inexpensive to produce. Although we think of reality shows as a recent phenomenon, they have been around for quite a while. Pioto and Otter (2007) trace modern reality shows to several programs that began in the late 1980s including *COPS* which showed police officers apprehending criminals. Using the phrase “reality TV” implies that real events are being documented and presented independently of the means by which they are captured. Some reality shows fit this description better than others. *COPS* used footage recorded by cameras mounted on the dashboards of police cars. Other reality TV shows like *Survivor* and *Big Brother* bring unlikely groups of people together and put them in unlikely environments. These particular types of reality

shows are considered direct descendants of social psychology experiments conducted in the sixties and seventies. The difference between the two lies in the manipulation and control of participants that would not pass a Human Subjects Review Board today. Reality TV show participants have few rights and fewer choices. They must do what the producers tell them or risk the consequences of leaving the show (Pioto & Otter, 2007).

In January 2006, nearly 36 million viewers watched the fifth season premiere of *American Idol* despite the fact that 82% of Americans believe reality TV shows are completely fake, according to a poll conducted by The Associated Press. Robert Thompson, director of the Center for the Study of Popular Television at Syracuse University, believes that most people think of the reality of reality TV as they do the reality of Santa Claus. He also stated that he does not know that viewers are expecting the integrity you would find in journalistic documentary when they tune into reality TV shows (Bauder, 2006).

Since my first experience being filmed for a reality television show (*Faking It*: participant is taught a profession opposite her own), I have become increasingly interested in the experiences of other reality television show participants. I was then filmed for a different type of show (*That's Clever*: artists are featured making their art) and found the experiences to be similar. During each filming experience, the producers told me what to say and asked me to act differently than I normally would. The result was that the person I portrayed on television is not who I am. Many of the scenes were staged, and the participants were asked to "perform" the scenes multiple times, just like actors are asked to do. *Faking It* was produced with one camera, limiting the angles and elements of surprise. Seventy-five hours of footage was shot for forty-two minutes of

airtime. Given my look behind the scenes of reality television shows, I am curious to know if viewers know just how unrealistic much of reality television is. The literature on reality TV points to authenticity as the reason for its popularity today, yet reality television is adding to the social deconstruction of knowledge. If viewers are aware of the artificiality of these types of shows, why do they watch them? These are all questions that will be asked in survey format in this study.

Documentary films have always been known to address social issues and to have the ability to impact society (Madsen, 1973). Television also has this power. Like documentaries, reality television is based on watching life as it occurs. Reality television is a growing force, and the impact it has on society is unknown. One way to measure the authenticity of reality television is to ask people who have been on the shows. Reality television show participants have been interviewed individually, but no one has studied them as a group. The experiences of these participants compared to the perceptions of viewers will give insight into the world of reality television. Kaysar Ridha, a participant on CBS' *Big Brother*, said "to be noticed, to be wanted, to be loved, to walk into a place and have others care about what you're doing, even what you have for lunch that day; that's what people want, in my opinion" (Carey, 2006, p. 1). Some psychologists posit that all people are trying to make sense of their lives and seeking fame is one way to do it (Carey, 2006).

Salman Rushdie (2001) may have said it best when he wrote that television used to be our window on the world, now it is just a mirror. Reality TV has revealed the narcissism of our culture. Viewers no longer need to watch celebrities because they can now watch themselves, or people similar to them, on television. The most important

concepts in today's society are "famous" and "rich" (Rushdie 2001). In our attempts to attain these goals, devious and exhibitionist behavior is required. People are famous for letting others watch them do very little. Anything goes in life as seen on television, and being a voyeur to these events has become acceptable. Rushdie (2001) proposes that gladiatorial combat has been reinvented and before long we will see people actually die on television for the entertainment of others.

Framework

John Dewey, an American philosopher, believed that one's experience is the most important means of gaining knowledge, and personal development and social progress are not possible without experience (Dewey, 1891). When it comes to reality television, there is no experience truer than that of the participant. How that experience is documented and presented to others can change the reality of the experience.

Television and film are not exact transcriptions of reality; editing makes this undeniably impossible. Once a camera is on, reality changes. Moving image documents cannot be read and interpreted the same way print documents are. Television is just a string of images, and pictures cannot be translated into words in a standard manner (O'Connor, 1986). The individual's perception of images is highly unique. The same picture can elicit entirely different emotions and reactions from different people.

The phrase "reality TV" is faulty in its construction. Whose reality does it refer to, that of the viewer, the producer, or the participants of the shows? "Reality" implies that something is real or factual. While reality TV is often filmed in a documentary style, many producers use the term "reality" loosely. We know from people who have been on reality shows that what their experiences were like can be very different from how they

appeared on television. Does this mean that their experience was not real or that the producers are altering reality? Television is entertainment, and as in all dramas, reality TV needs a story to draw viewers. The word “unscripted” is often used to promote reality TV. While the participants may not be given lines to read, claiming that the shows are produced entirely without scripts is misleading. Narrative requires scripting, and directors nudge things along however overtly. If the producers waited for the story to unfold, they might run out of money and time.

Everything that is caught on camera is real; whether it involved acting or not, the event had to occur for it to be captured on camera. The event could have happened at any time, and if there are no clues as to when the event occurred, it can be inserted into any moving document to prove any point. When some event is caught on camera and then used out of context, reality has been changed. Viewers do not know the extent to which editing takes events out of context because they were not there to experience what happened firsthand. Furthermore, television presents a representation of an event which indicates that some information will be left out or lost (O'Connor, 1996).

Representations are not exact duplicates of reality. Multiple representations can be found in reality TV. From the filming to the editing, cascading representations are created. Hayes (1993) proposed that communication involves many layers of representation. Observations made by people are represented through data, and data are then processed into the creation of information. The recipients of the information must have understanding for the information to become knowledge that they will then base decisions upon. Through each of these steps, there will be a loss in precision due to limitations in the process (Hayes, 1993).

Reality TV gives people the opportunity to live vicariously. Few people actually participate in reality TV shows. Everyone else is living those experiences through television, which represents the outlook of the producers of each show. Reality TV has many different perspectives, including those of the participants, the viewers, and the crewmembers. Viewers do not see how much input the producers/directors have into what the participants say or do. Participants do not know how they will be portrayed on film. Producers have the most control over the filming and editing process, and they use whatever techniques necessary to achieve the stories they need.

The reality of reality television is altered in numerous ways. First of all, casting practices are used to find the right participants. Drama creates good TV and conflict creates drama, so people are chosen according to how their personalities may clash. Reality TV participants are not everyday people, although they are presented as such to gain viewers' interest. Many of them are looking for their 15 minutes of fame and some for a career in television or film. While producers will deny that they ask participants to act, most participants are asked, at the very least, to reenact scenes or events. Choosing the right person for a show requires casting producers and extensive deliberation.

Once someone is chosen and filming begins, that person's reality is temporarily altered. The reality of the participant becomes whatever situation he or she is put into. Living on an island with strangers for over a month to win one million dollars is not most peoples' reality, but it is for those filmed for *Survivor*. Participants internalize the producers' goals making them reality because there is no other way once they have committed to being filmed (Balkin, 2004). The consequences for not submitting to the

wishes of the producers, which you are contractually obligated to do, are great. It does not matter if the participant is trying to win money or just getting a makeover, a lot can be lost by not complying. Once filming is over, most participants go home and resume living normal lives. Whether the participant's experience changes his or her life depends on the individual.

People gather information from a variety of sources, and it is available everywhere whether or not it is being actively sought. Television is a major source of information for most people. It can influence viewers' beliefs about and perceptions of people and the world. This influence is important because most people do not have the opportunity and/or the inclination to meet different people or travel to foreign places. Discerning fact from fiction is difficult because the line between the two is often blurred, and fiction is intentionally presented as fact. Individuals comprise a set of attributes that are both evolved and learned. O'Connor and Copeland (2003) call this a person's knowledge state, and when faced with unfamiliar information, a change of state must occur. People gather information from television to change their knowledge state. Choosing what is relevant information is not always a conscious decision either (O'Connor & Copeland, 2003).

If reality is merely what we see with our eyes and process with our brains, then presenting a reality that is not true to the reality of the world can create false knowledge. This is, arguably, what reality TV producers do all of the time. Reality TV presents a myriad of stereotypes to characterize the participants. This is done so viewers can relate to what they see and understand why conflict arises between participants. Constructing knowledge in order to create a story is problematic when the knowledge is

only half true. If a viewer has never met a librarian, and the image of a librarian as presented on reality TV matches the viewer's stereotype- that of a shy, conservatively dressed woman- then the viewer is likely to believe all librarians are shy and dress conservatively. This poses a societal problem. Also concerning is the possibility that future observers of today's reality TV programs may take what they see for historical fact.

Wilson (1983) proposed the idea of "second-hand knowledge," the notion that people acquire much of their knowledge through other people rather than through personal experience. Most people use second-hand knowledge along with personal experience to construct their worldview (Wilson, 1983). A widely available source of second-hand knowledge is television, including reality TV. The popularity of television points to the possibility that a significant portion of socially accepted knowledge may come from what people see on TV. If what people are presented on television is based on false assumptions, the knowledge that has been socially constructed may lead to faulty assumptions and actions.

O'Connor (1996) proposed a model for how people take the information that is available to them in documents and make decisions based on the dissemination of that information. His representation context web model (Figure 1) shows the possible problems that arise when an individual searches for a document to answer his information quest. Representation is presented as "a system for extracting or highlighting some aspects of an original concept or object, together with some explanation of how the system does this" (O'Connor, 1996, p. 19). The "object/event space" represents all of our actions and interactions. The "social and idiosyncratic

conventions for observation and action” refers to the worldviews that we develop through upbringing and experience. The “author” is the creator of the document, and the “client” is the one searching for information. “Text” stands for the original work of the author which is not necessarily the same as the published document. Some hurdles lie between the two including production constraints and a distribution system. “Meaning” is the result of the outcome, the interaction between the client and the document. Meaning only occurs if the client gains understanding of the document (Hayes, 1993).

O’Connor’s model does not discriminate with regards to the document being purely textual. He implies that the document can be any form: a film, music, a painting. With some adaptation (Figure 2), the model becomes a means of explaining the information created through reality television production and how that knowledge is imparted to viewers. The client becomes the viewer, and the author, the producer. The participant of the show has a great deal of input into the production and acts as a part in the object/event space. Each player has a different purpose for the eventual document (which is called a moving document here). At this point the purposes are unknown.

The footage acts as the untouched text before it is edited and changed into the document that is presented on television. Once viewers see the final product, they must then disseminate the information and accept or reject the knowledge imparted. The model implies that the footage and the moving document are not the same because of the intermediary steps. This study will attempt to discover the extent to which editing shapes the final product and how knowledge is constructed through this process.

Figure 1. O'Connor's representation context web.

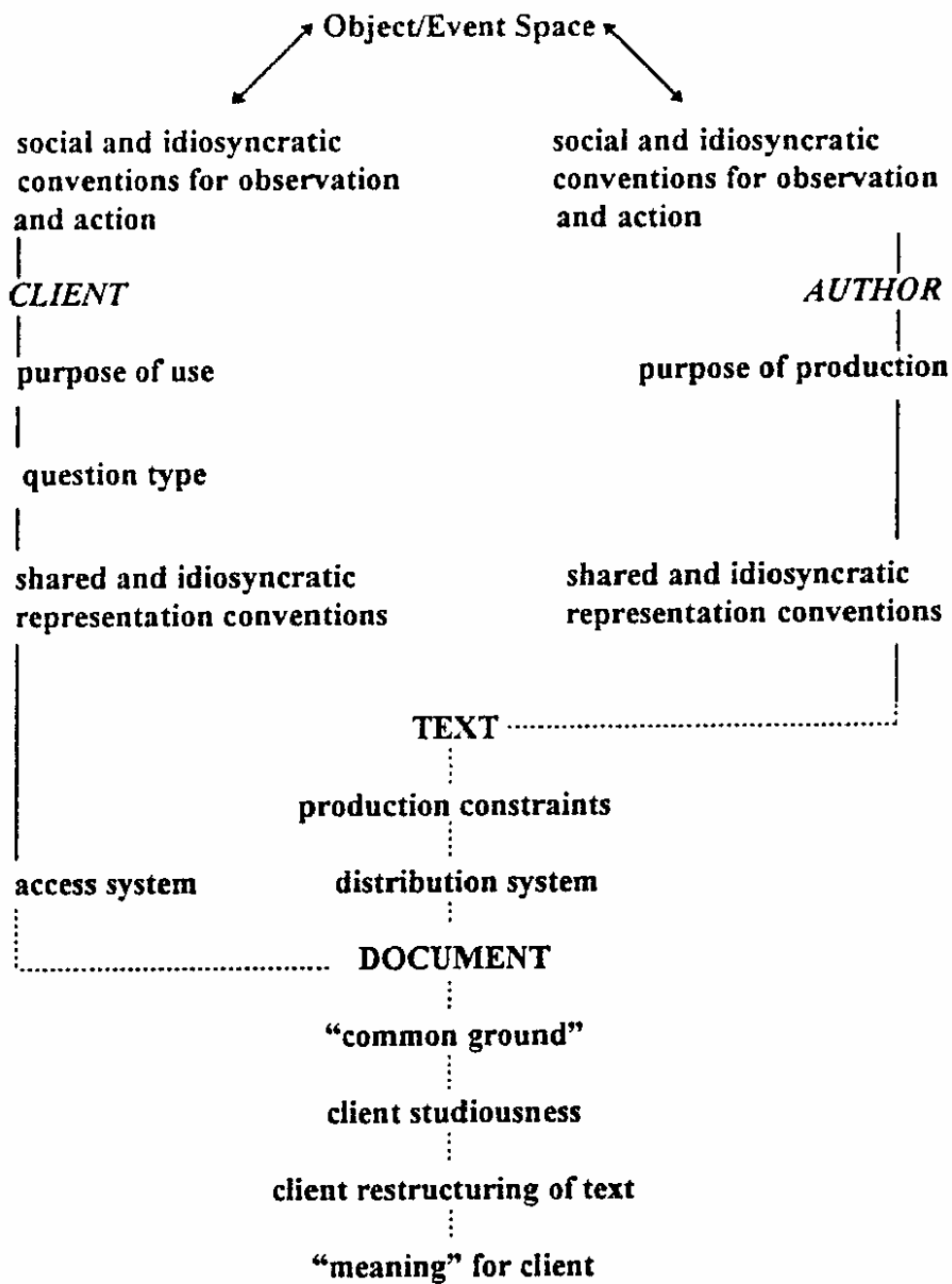
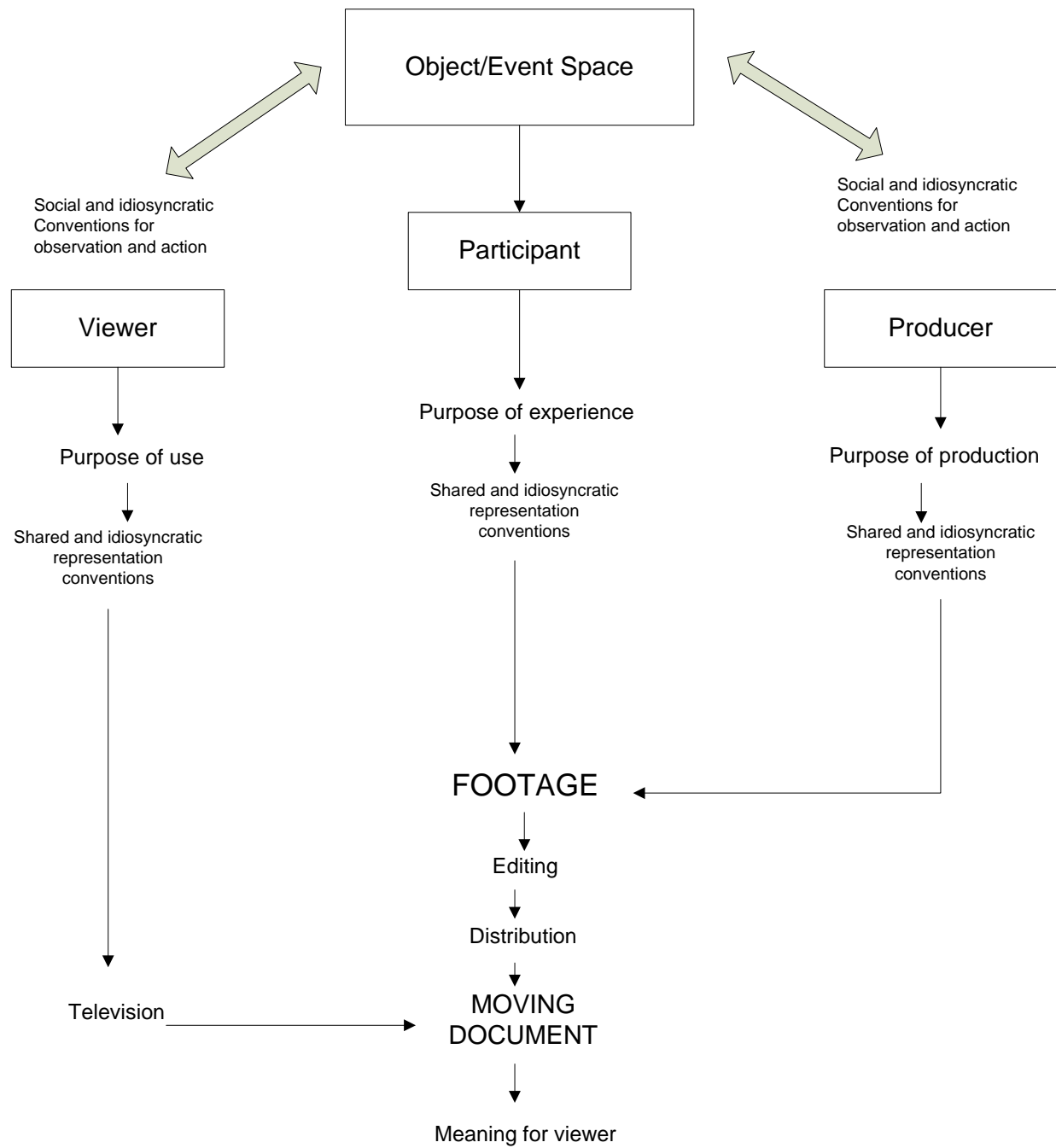


Figure 2. Adapted representation context web.



In order to explore the powerful information and entertainment medium that is Reality TV, I undertook two methods of examination. First I became the singular subject of a major reality TV show to gauge my personal experience against the final televised product. Then I conducted an examination of the “realities” of other participants and of viewers.

My experience on a reality TV show was not negative, but it was not what I expected. Even though I had watched reality TV and was familiar with the format, I was surprised when the producer told me how many takes would be required. People who choose to be on these shows know some of what they are getting in to, but they really do not know what the experience will be like (Kushman, 2002). Even though participants often appear unhappy or dissatisfied with their situation, very few quit. I never considered quitting, even though at times it was very difficult. When you are taken away from your life and put into unusual or uncomfortable circumstances, you find a way to cope and to continue. The producers do not want you to quit because that could be disastrous for the production, so they know when to give encouragement and when to ease-up on the pressure. One way to define reality TV is to consider the experiences of all people involved in the production and consumption of these shows and compare their answers.

Reality TV’s impact on today’s culture is visible everywhere. Fiction and nonfiction works alike have been affected. Memoirs are no longer necessarily true, and the number of fictional books about reality TV shows and reality TV show participants has grown exponentially. Blogs, or online journals, have become extremely popular because people are interested in reading about the everyday lives of people the way

they like to watch real people on television. Of course the authenticity of anything online is questionable. Anyone with access to a computer can write a blog, and they can write anything they want. There is no way to prove what is true or false. The fastest growing Website in popular culture today is YouTube, which allows anyone to view, post and share video clips for free. The videos range from people simply talking on camera to elaborate music videos to TV and movie clips. There is no way to know if people are being themselves or acting, but that has not dampened the popularity of YouTube.

Purpose of this Study

Within this study I plan to use my own experience to develop a survey to answer the questions presented in the framework. Television is a major source of information in today's culture. Reality TV presents a method of bringing information about real people to the viewers. How accurate that information is has yet to be determined. That the footage undergoes major editing before being presented to viewers is not new, but viewers may not be aware of how much editing goes into "reality" TV. I want to explore this idea through surveys to participants and viewers in order to determine where the reality lies and if the truth is not being told, how much does this matter to the viewers.

Research Significance

Reality TV is an established genre of television that seems to be growing continuously. The question of its authenticity has been a source of debate among critics, and while viewers and participants have been interviewed separately, a comparison has not been done within the same study. Television is used in the dissemination of information, as such, it is a major force that must be analyzed.

Method

Survey methods must be used for collecting data due to limited resources.

Fortunately, the Internet makes communication with subjects around the world easy and virtually free. A survey will be used in the study, but individuals will be presented with many open-ended questions so they may incorporate the use of narrative into their answers. Mumby (1993) wrote that the authorial voice of the researcher must be put aside so that the multiple voices of the subjects are given room to be heard. As a reality TV participant, I remember returning home after the experience and wanting to talk about it constantly. I had an audience for a while, but eventually no one was left to listen. I felt I still had a story to tell, but I had already told everyone. One reality TV participant interviewed as part of this study was very excited to talk about his experience that had happened three years ago. At the end of the interview, he said I had brought up a lot of things he had not thought about and that he was going to call some of his fellow participants later that evening to catch up. Being on a reality TV show is a unique experience, and I think we share commonalities that will become apparent through the survey proposed here.

Storytelling is an integral part of television and especially important to reality TV. Real people are used to tell a particular story: how people survive and get along on *Survivor*, how a “regular” person becomes a music star on *American Idol* or how a librarian becomes a bartender on *Faking It*. Even on series that feature many individuals, background information is given about the main characters to interest viewers. Participants are given roles to play in order to fill the narrative gaps.

Summary

My role as participant observer is the basis for this research. Through further inquiry into the world of reality TV, I found that my experience was not uncommon. I was given a unique insight into how television is made and how one specific reality show is put together. Through this study, I intend to determine if other participants have similar experiences and how they feel about that time in their lives. The reality that the producers present through editing and other methods of directing may not be the same as what happened. This new reality is what is presented to viewers. If they are gaining errant knowledge from what they see, then what the viewers experience when they watch reality TV and what they take away from that viewing is important.

Definition of Terms

real adj. **1.** actually existing or happening. **2.** not artificial; genuine. **3.** worthy of the description; proper.

reality n. **1.** the state of things as they actually exist. **2.** a thing that is real. **3.** the state of being real. **reality TV** television programmes based on real people or situations, presented as entertainment

script n. **1.** the written text of a play, film, or broadcast. **2.** handwriting as distinct from print.

Little Oxford English Dictionary. (2006). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Not since the quiz show craze of the 1950's has the idea of real people on television been so popular. Nonfictional television in primetime slots has never enjoyed the popularity it does today. Roman (2005) wrote that there has always been reality TV. *Queen for a Day* began on the radio in 1945 and started on television in 1955. Audiences chose which woman's story of woe was the saddest, and the women won prizes such as refrigerators and washing machines (Roman, 2005). Since the premier of MTV's *The Real World* in 1992, the number of reality television shows in the United States has grown exponentially so that it is one of the main forms of television programming today. The reality TV craze of today took off with the success of *Survivor* in 2000 (Korbelik, 2004).

According to *Nielsen Media Research*, over half of American TV shows are considered reality shows. Viewers are bombarded by reality television programming, which promises the opportunity of seeing ordinary people performing tasks from the every-day to the extraordinary (Jagodozinki, 2003). The producers of reality TV promise unscripted access to actual people. Murray and Ouellette (2004) propose that the voyeuristic desires of viewers combined with claims of challenging situations and dramatic uncertainty explain the popularity of these shows. People want to watch others face the gauntlet of unfamiliar circumstances and contrary personalities to see how they fare. Viewers also empathize with the participants as a way of living vicariously through them. This is not a new phenomenon; the reality TV shows of today are the progeny of

past programming, including the game shows of the 1950's, talk shows born in the 1980's, and other programs such as *Star Search*, *Candid Camera*, and *Queen for a Day*. Reality television, past and present, is essentially the drama of genuine people in contrived situations (Murray & Ouellette, 2004). *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) introduced audiences to handheld camera shots and the look of present day reality shows with in-your-face angles (Jagodozinki, 2003). *The Blair Witch Project* presentation of fiction as reality added greatly to its success. Before its release, a Website claimed that the film was a documentary and the true story of three filmmakers (Valenti, 2000).

Carey (2006) purports that the appeal of reality television is two sided. Production companies can make reality television for a fraction of the cost of fictional television because they do not have to pay actors or writers, and the participants in these shows are willing to accept little to no compensation for their fifteen minutes of fame. About 30% of adults dream of being famous, while 40% believe that they will experience that fame, however short, at some point in their lives (Carey, 2006). Viewers, on the other hand, cannot seem to get enough of real people on television.

Swedish reality TV show participant, Sinisa Savija, threw himself under a train in 1997 (Brenton & Cohen, 2003). He was the first person kicked off the show *Expedition Robinson* that, despite the rocky start, became a top rated show. (*Expedition Robinson* was based on the British show, *Survive!*, as was the American show, *Survivor*). Producers were exonerated of Savija's death. His wife said he was worried they would only show the embarrassing things he did to explain his being voted off the show, and he would look like a fool. *Big Brother* followed and is now the most globally successful

reality television show. A week before polling day in 2001, 4.3 million people watched the BBC's 10 o'clock news while at the same time 4.4 million watched *Big Brother UK*. Seven million viewers voted in the final choice that season (Brenton & Cohen, 2003). From quiz shows and news based programming, to dating and survival contests, to home improvement and *The Apprentice*- the "reality" of TV programs and TV viewing television is presented daily.

Documentary Film

Reality television shows seem to combine aspects of several different forms of documentary film. In the beginning of documentary filmmaking, reality was treated as the subject not the background. Documentary is an essential element of the film tradition (Jacobs, 1971). The definition of documentary film varies depending on whom you ask. It has been called, "a creative treatment of actuality," "a selective dramatization of fact in terms of their human consequences," and "a film, usually nonfiction, in which the elements of dramatic conflict are provided by ideas and political or economic forces" (Madsen, 1973, p. 317). The documentary is the closest we come to a purely factual film form. Documentaries generally do not use professional actors and are based on recording life, but they may be heavily edited. Although documentary film is based in actuality, like all documentation, the influence of the creator always has some effect on the product, directly or indirectly (Coles, 1997).

According to Madsen (1973), characteristics common to documentary style films include subject matter, concept, purpose, theme, and technique. The subject matter is factual, based on the lives of living creatures. Concept refers to the idea that documentaries are intended to educate or provoke social change, rather than to merely

entertain. The purpose of documentary is to engage viewers' interests in social matters and to encourage them to act. The genre is intended to synthesize public sentiment and help the audience develop a sense of will so that they might act decisively regarding the subject matter. In theme, a documentary should be concerned with the outcomes of the subjects, and the technique of documentary refers to the fact that it is a motion picture, filmed and edited with a wide audience in mind (Madsen, 1973). However, McDonald (1942) wrote that documentary films must have records and standards; otherwise film cannot be used as a primary source in research.

Reality television shows and reality-based stories are the most popular genres on television today. Rosenthal (1995) defines docudrama as a mix of fact and fiction that dramatizes historical events and people. Actors, sets, and costumes are used to recreate factual life events. Docudrama is often used when traditional documentary means are impossible. The whole story may not be known or an individual's personality must be developed. A filmmaker's first consideration must be appealing to the target audience. In documentary filmmaking, subjects and locations are chosen based on documentary truth, or how representative that person is to the larger group. In selecting graphic elements, the filmmaker is defining stereotypes that the viewers will recognize (Rosenthal, 1995).

The five major types of documentary film evolved at the end of World War I. Each strand is based on what was happening in its country of origin at that particular time. The first documentary films were naturalistic due to one of the first influential films, *Nanook of the North*, a 1922 film about the life of Eskimos. The social action documentary, which is the most common form of documentary, was developed in Britain

with *Drifters* (1929), a film about social classes and conflicts. During the first decade of the Communist State, Russians invented both the newsreel documentary and the propaganda film. The first newsreel documentary reported the events of the Revolution and the daily lives of common people. The propaganda film is the most emotionally appealing persuasive type. It was used by the Soviet government to promote their ideals, practices and policies. The fifth type of documentary, realistic documentary, was developed by the French and is also known as *cinéma vérité*. As the title indicates, *cinéma vérité* presents aspects of daily life with no commentary or interpretation. These films often lack structure and are defined more as art films rather than documentary (Madsen, 1973).

A Country Auction: The Paul V. Leitzel Estate Sale is a documentary produced in 1984 about the auction that took place after the death of the owner of the last general store in a rural community in Pennsylvania. This unique documentary followed the family members of the deceased as they went through his belongings, the auction day, and then what happened to the objects. "The film uses filmic techniques and conventions very thoughtfully to construct a scientific argument. Both the intentions of the makers and the various methods employed are dealt with explicitly in this production. The actual production process of the film and the filmmakers are also a topic of this visual study, so that the role of the researchers and the research process are not concealed" (Pauwels, 2006, p. 141). Because the filmmakers and the production were not concealed, *A Country Auction* is an important study in the reality of moving documents (Pauwels, 2006).

Madsen (1973) proposed that documentary film has three formats: pure, mixed, and dramatized. Pure documentary includes footage taken in natural locations where the subjects are unaware of the filming or have little concern for the crew. Mixed documentaries have both observational and staged pieces. Recreated scenes are used to capture events that the cameraman might not observe if he waits for it to occur naturally. Recreated scenes can cause viewers to feel that the film is inauthentic. To create a sense of credibility, the recreated scenes should be indistinguishable from the rest of the film. The dramatized documentary relies solely on reenacted scenes, which can be difficult to execute well. The use of actors or written dialogue is easily detected by audiences and makes the film more of a drama than a documentary. Dramatized documentaries that are done well do not have the subjects vocalizing at all unless they are telling a story in their own words (Madsen, 1973).

Documentary and Reality TV

Reality television seems to be founded on the basis of documentary filmmaking: the unbiased presentation of true-life subjects and events. Murray & Ouellette (2004) wrote that reality television is unlike documentary in that it is not tied to claims of truth, and there are few ethical concerns for the participants. The important questions are whether audiences of reality television know how scripted it actually is and if this matters. Reality TV establishes new relationships between “reality” and its representation. John Corner wrote that producers, participants, and viewers are less interested in absolute truth and more interested in the space between reality and fiction. He has called this concept television’s “postdocumentary context.” The defining element of reality television is the commingling of performance with naturalism (Murray &

Ouellette, 2004). This is not unlike certain types of documentary film. In most reality shows, the main difference is the absence of the authorial voiceover, which distances the audience in documentary film (Jagodozinki, 2003).

The difficulty in analyzing reality television lies in determining what “real” means. Some believe that reality television is fictitious or that it is a constructed version of reality (Andriacco, 2003). Tremblay (2003) wrote that stagings of reality have been around as long as people have been telling stories. *Survivor* is very similar to another widely popular narrative, *Robinson Crusoe*, released in 1719. The novel is a story of survival that appealed to readers across class lines because of its down-to-earth main character. The fictional landscape was unknown, but the elements of realism, including the everyman hero, brought it closer to the reader. *Survivor* and other reality programs achieve the same end by having many participants with whom a diverse audience can identify (Delisle, 2003). Never before have so many minority groups been represented on television. Because participants are chosen with their differences in mind, reality shows have more diverse characters than other television programs. For example, almost every reality show has a gay or lesbian participant. While their sexual orientation may add an element of controversy to the program, their inclusion likely attracts an important group of viewers (Andriacco, 2003).

A major component of documentary film is the appeal of the subject matter. A main character that commands the emotional involvement of the audience will be able to hold the attention of the audience better than a character in which the audience is not invested. The appeal of documentary is often in the voyeuristic stance the viewers take when they are allowed an intimate look into the life of another human being or the

varied lives of a group of people (Madsen, 1973). Movies based on historical events often do well because they involve viewers who either experienced that period in time or are curious about what it was like to live during such events. Jennifer Lane, a reality TV producer and cinematographer who has worked on numerous shows, believes that some shows that are considered reality TV by audiences are really documentaries. As director of photography for *The Osbournes*, she said that the crew was watching life unfold. The family was observed in their home doing everyday things. The participants were not directed so she considers *The Osbournes* a true documentary rather than reality TV (Goodridge, 2002; Appendix B).

Teachers use films, including documentaries, docudramas, and historical fiction, to bring their classroom lessons alive (D'Sa, 2005). *Schindler's List* is an example where the historical basis of the film made it emotional and unforgettable. The story of Oskar Schindler saving one thousand Jews from certain death in a Nazi death camp would not have been as poignant if it was entirely fictitious. Stories that tug viewers' heartstrings are found in every type of TV program, including reality television. Reality TV has even been the subject of documentary; a fake British reality show sought contestants willing to conceive a baby on air with a stranger for money. The documentary shows how far people are willing to go to be on TV (Moore, 2006).

History of Reality Television

Filmmaking began a century ago as a form of entertainment and has since evolved into a major source of global communication (Madsen, 1973). Cinema is everywhere, and television is inescapable. The willingness of television producers to cater to viewer attitudes and preferences is an integral part of television's success. The

rise of reality television is directly linked to viewer interests and what is currently popular in society. The cinematic development of characters is as important in documentary film as it is in fictional productions. Relationships between characters play a large part in the dramatic appeal of documentary and how viewers relate to the characters (Madsen, 1973). The personalities of the characters are a major force in reality television. Casting is done with specific traits in mind with the expectation that if you get enough people with strong personalities in the same room, conflict will occur. If it does not, producers create situations to elicit the conflict for which they are looking. Just like in film, the protagonist is expected to change. Without change we do not have an authentic experience (Balkin, 2004).

Balkin (2004) writes that reality TV has been in development since the creation of national broadcasting at the end of the 1940's starting with *Candid Camera* in 1948. *An American Family*, 1973, followed the lives of the Loud family for 7 months. Ten million viewers witnessed the breakup of the marriage and saw their son come out as gay to his family. *An American Family* was presented as a documentary on PBS and is often cited as the first reality TV show (Balkin, 2004).

"Reality TV in the twenty-first century", said Robert Thompson, director of the Center for the Study of Popular Television at Syracuse University, represents "a new way of telling a story which is half fiction – the producers and creators set up a universe, they give it rules, they make a setting, they cast it according to specific guidelines as to who they think are going to provide good pyrotechnics. But then they bring in non-actors with no scripts and allow this kind of improvisation like a jazz piece to occur" (Balkin, 2004, p. 10).

The first modern reality television show, *The Real World*, was geared towards MTV viewers and filmed in a documentary style. Each year seven people are chosen based on preconceived notions about their characters to live together in an unfamiliar city so that viewers can watch the drama that develops in their relationships with each other. The cast members were, and continue to be, young, single, attractive and edgy. They are handpicked to provide maximum entertainment to a young audience with similar characteristics and aspirations. *The Real World* marked the emergence of textual characteristics that are what reality TV is defined by today. However, while the reality programs of today have incorporated its style, they have not captured the substance of *The Real World* (Roman, 2005). The subgenres television viewers are familiar with today, the gamedoc, dating, talent, and court shows, makeover/lifestyle, and the celebrity variations were all born out of the first reality TV show. Networks started producing reality TV following the success of *Survivor* (Murray & Ouellette, 2004). Documentary films have rarely commanded the attention of audiences the way feature films have, yet the television programs with the highest ratings today are documentary in style. Like film, television is, first and foremost, a story-telling medium (Carey, 1988). Every aspect of television must be tied to an overall story for the content to appeal to viewers. Even news is packaged to entertain, to hold the audience's attention (Grace, 2005).

Brian O'Connor was present at the 1976 Olympic Trials. He recalled how the ABC News coverage created a rivalry between two young gymnasts. The rivalry could not have existed because this was before electronic scoring. The athletes did not know their scores until the end of the trials so they could not have known if they

were close in score or not. However, in the footage broadcast to viewers, shots cut back and forth between the girls and narration implied they were vying for first place.

O'Connor recalled another incident at the 1976 trials. A gymnast fell and was hurt during a routine. Her mother tried to run out onto the mat to help, but a cameraman yelled at her to get out of the shot. Rather than capture a heartfelt moment between the gymnast and her mother, the cameraman intervened to prevent the mother from ruining his shot (Brian O'Connor, personal communication, February 23, 2007).

Nancy Grace, a former trial lawyer, is the host of *Closing Arguments* on Court TV and *Nancy Grace on CNN's Headline News*. Even trials have joined the ranks of real televised events. Grace (2005) maintains that court TV is very real unlike reality TV. She writes that reality TV is contrived TV and should not be mistaken with the real events that she deals with on Court TV and CNN. She believes that reality television began in 1991 when Court TV debuted. The idea was that people should have the opportunity to see how their justice system works, and TV can facilitate such access as well as expose the wrongs of the justice system. Today, forty-eight states allow camera coverage of some legal proceedings. Grace maintains that by televising actual court proceedings, we are more likely to learn the truth because it comes directly from the participants rather than through the media. However, there is evidence reported in the news that jurors do not hear, such as the OJ Simpson car chase. The facts Grace reports on her television shows coupled with televised trials provides the viewer with the big picture (Grace, 2005).

There are several different types of reality TV including documentary style, game shows, self-improvement/makeover, dating, talk shows, hidden cameras, and hoaxes. Within documentary style falls subheadings: special living environment, celebrity reality, and professional activities. Documentary refers to shows that are filmed in the cinéma vérité style where participants are given no tasks to complete and they are put in real life locations. *The Real World* is an example of special living environment show. Celebrity reality includes *The Simple Life* and *The Osbournes*. The subcategory of professional activities portrays professionals in their everyday life such as in *The Restaurant* and *American Chopper*. Many show fall under the game show category including *American Idol*, *Big Brother*, and *Survivor*. *The Bachelor* is the most well-known of the dating-based competition form of reality TV. Job search shows are some of the most popular including *The Apprentice*, *Top Chef*, and *America's Next Top Model*. A few shows are based on sports such as *The Contender* and *The Ultimate Fighter*. Self-improvement/makeover has had many incarnations from *Changing Rooms* which started in 1996 in Britain to *The Biggest Loser* and *Extreme Makeover* in the US. *Blind Date* is an example of dating shows. They differ from dating-based competition because there is no element of competition. Some talk shows fit into the genre of reality TV because of their penchant for conflict and outrageous topics like those seen on *The Jerry Springer Show*. The use of hidden cameras was made popular by *Candid Camera* and can be seen in *Punk'd*. Hoax reality shows involve a prank being played on an unsuspecting cast member. *My Fat Obnoxious Fiancé* centered around a woman who had to convince her family that she wanted to marry a man she had just met who was both unattractive and obnoxious. If she convinced her family to help her with the

wedding plans and to attend, she would win a prize from the production company (Andrejevic, 2004).

Media's Impact on Society

The role media plays in American life is one of the strongest influences on our culture. Media can educate, inform, and entertain. Andriacco (2003) has written that mass media has become our culture. In 2001, 98.2% of households in America had at least one television set. The average number of sets per household was 2.4 (census.gov, 2001). Television is the widest reaching source of information today. Programming, including news, drama, talk shows, and reality TV shows, shapes how people think and how they react to others and interact in society. A major example of the media's influence includes its impact on elections and the presidency (Cunningham, 1995). In Cunningham's (1995) book, *Talking Politics: Choosing the president in the television age*, she interviews influential members of the press and political candidates. She concludes that television journalism can reveal as well as distort the news. Television allows for the ability to control and deceive. Elections are largely influenced by television because that is often the only source of information people rely on when making their political decisions. Manipulation of the media is seen in the news also. The power of media is evident in our society. Media has the ability to create public opinion on new issues that have not been given prior attention by viewers. A nation permeated by media can be influenced through film and television very easily, and a nation's character can be changed through its influence (Madsen, 1973).

Rosenberg (2004) writes what makes news does not always make sense. Whatever is most sensational gets the most time. There is probably no better example

of this than the in-depth coverage of Anna Nicole Smith's death, funeral, and related court proceedings during February and March of 2007. When you are a celebrity there is no such thing as privacy. Journalists make it their mission to expose the private lives of celebrities despite their wishes to the contrary. Tennis legend, Arthur Ashe gave a news conference to announce he was HIV positive because USA Today threatened to break the story first (Rosenberg, 2004).

Less obvious, but still substantial, is the influence of programming that purports to present news in more entertaining ways such as news magazines like *Dateline* and *20/20*. These programs claim that their information is as accurate as traditional news reports, but their formats and topics are markedly different. Of course, standard news broadcasts have also embraced many of these tactics as evidenced by commercials that run hours or even days before the segment. The style of primetime shows is more documentary in nature, using actual life events but presentation and editing that appeal to a larger audience.

Reality Television's Growing Popularity

In 2006, for the first time in 12 years, the Grammy Awards did not have the highest ratings of the night. Twenty-nine million viewers chose to watch amateurs on *American Idol* rather than professionals on the Grammys. Ironically, *American Idol* winner Kelly Clarkson performed on the Grammys, but her performance was seen by few *American Idol* fans because they chose to watch a reality TV show rather than a live music award broadcast (de Moraes, 2006).

Balkin (2004) suggested that viewers watch reality TV for a variety of reasons. They identify with the participants, relish the competitive nature of the shows, and/or enjoy the voyeuristic perspective their position as viewer accords them. People want to be on these shows because of the offer of instant fame. Networks like to produce reality TV shows because they are popular and inexpensive compared to other shows. Reality shows are unscripted so they do not require writers. A reality TV show costs about \$750,000 per episode whereas a popular sitcom can cost up to \$3 million. The writers' strike in 2001 has been credited with giving reality TV a major rise in popularity among producers (Balkin, 2004).

Reality television shows and reality-based stories are the most popular television genres today. Unscripted television is in demand with young audiences because it provides excitement and intimacy (Roman, 2005). What appeals to people is quite obvious by what we encounter on TV. We learn of secrets through news stories and entertainment television. What celebrities are doing is always of interest to the public. Scandals and strange behaviors are also highlighted everyday on news shows and drama series. Stories that pull emotional heartstrings are popular and can be found in made for TV movies. These movies often recreate real life struggles and events that cause viewers to sympathize with the main characters (Roman, 2005).

In their book *Reality TV: Remaking television culture*, Murray and Ouellette (2004) write that reality TV's demand is based on its promise of providing a window to real people's lives. The nonscripted access to these stories gives the viewer a sense of dramatic uncertainty that is not found in scripted dramas. People enjoy the ability to become legal voyeurs. Murray and Ouellette (2004) go on to say that reality TV is not

tied to claims of truth so it is unlike news or documentary. Reality TV may be called educational in nature, but there are few ethical concerns over the human subjects, which distinguish it from documentary. They suggest that reality television's staying power should call for an investigation of its relationship to truth and authenticity (Murray & Ouellette, 2004).

The way reality television programs are filmed is very similar to other television shows or films. Camera techniques are reminiscent of observational documentaries and cinema vérité. Reality television shows and other types of shows like *America's Most Wanted* and *Unsolved Mysteries* incorporate new media techniques such as handheld cameras and diary cams. Reality television has impacted standard television dramas and comedies like *NYPD Blue* and *Arrested Development*, which used similar filming techniques. Although these shows are fictional, the use of handheld cameras lends an element of genuineness that was not seen before in dramas and situation comedies.

Since 9/11 and the Patriot Act, there has been a rise in people being watched. Reality TV's popularity has some basis in its connection to surveillance. Murray and Ouellette (2004) wrote that by watching we agree to be watched. In actuality, the idea that cameras are watching the participant's every move is not realized in most productions. *Big Brother* is the only show where the participants can be watched virtually 24 hours a day through internet broadcasts (Andrejevic, 2004). Other productions have storyboards that are kept from the subjects but are followed very much like those used in fictional programs. Scenes are often set-up with special lighting depending on the situation. The participants are brought into the scene, given the expectations of the producer and directed through the shot, often having to repeat

“lines” or rephrase their own conversations to appeal to a greater audience. Smaller productions require more takes, given the limitations of fewer cameras and smaller crews (Andrejevic, 2004).

Reiss and Wiltz (2001) believe that the fascination viewers have with reality TV is based on Americans desire to be famous. Because so many fans are watching the participants, they are seen as important. Reiss and Wiltz (2001) contend that it does not matter if the contestants are shown in an unfavorable light. The fact that so many people are watching makes them important. Several participants have found further fame after the show concludes giving hope to those at home that regular people can become famous just like these reality TV show participants (Reiss & Wiltz, 2001).

Reality in Reality Television

Alfred Hitchcock said, “Drama is life with the dull parts left out” (Poague, 2006, p. 11A). Reality TV has been described as a new way of telling a story. It is half fiction because producers create a world for the contestants, rules are written, and casting is done to maximize drama. Non-actors are brought in, not given scripts, and are expected to improvise (Balkin, 2003). The claim of realism is very important in the promotion of reality television shows. Rather than letting the footage speak for itself, producers use techniques to assert that the film is factual, which makes it more contrived. People tend to believe that cameras objectively capture life, yet they do not always realize that while the camera catches the event, producers make that footage subjective through editing (Gillespie, 2000).

Of course, the basis of reality television is reality. We are expected to believe that what we are seeing is real. Experiences of the contestants and viewers suggest this

is not entirely true. This begs the question, how closely related are documentary and reality television? Is reality television a form of documentary? If so, how close does reality television get to true life? What do the viewers believe? Are they being misled, or is it just another form of entertainment that audiences recognize as half-truth. What makes reality television so popular? NBC Universal Television president Jeff Zucker says using the word “reality” implies that everything shown is real. “‘Reality’ is a misnomer.” He does not call them reality shows but unscripted dramas (Korbelik, 2004, p. 4). Pioto and Otter (2007) write that reality TV has the effect of reality because of the feelings of surveillance and therapy. Surveillance is used in the shows to give viewers an intimate look into someone’s life. The confessional, which is frequently used in reality shows, gives the viewer entrance into the emotions and thoughts of the participants. What was once the privileged right of therapists has now become public (Pioto & Otter, 2007).

The reality in *Survivor II: The Australian Outback* was in question when viewers learned that some scenes were reenacted. Executive producer Mark Burnett claims that, although stand-ins reenacted some scenes, the results of the show were not affected. His attitude is that he is making great television so it does not matter if reality is kept totally intact. The people in shows like *Survivor* are part of a fictional narrative, and the show is contrived just like most entertainment television (Roman, 2005).

Project Greenlight is an example of a series that is part reality and part documentary. This HBO show follows a crew and actors as a movie is being made. The participants said shooting the movie was one of the most pleasant sets they had worked on, but most of the footage aired was the conflicts and mistakes that, in reality, paled in

comparison to the many hours of peace. Kushman (2002) wrote that *Project Greenlight* is an example of conflict being important for drama. He also said that in documentaries, news, and reality television, what is shown to the viewers is not what was true for the participants. What works for TV is shown, not what really happened. These formats cater to what makes good TV rather than presenting the truth (Kushman, 2002).

MTV's *Sorority Life* followed a pledge class on the Davis campus of the University of California. The producer claimed that the series would be documentary in nature and would attempt to break stereotypes of sorority girls. In promoting the show, the senior vice president of MTV was reluctant to use the word documentary and insisted on throwing in "reality TV." The draw of this particular series is the opportunity for viewers to enter a world otherwise inaccessible (Kushman, 2002).

Motley Crew drummer Tommy Lee spent less than a semester on campus at the University of Nebraska filming a reality TV show, *Tommy Lee Goes to College*, in which viewers are supposed to believe that Tommy Lee was accepted to the university, went to classes, and joined the band. The show was described as a comedy reality. Viewers will see Lee park his car on the first day of classes, but they will not know that he missed his first class because of several takes. He also started class late, left before the semester was over, and took a week off in the middle. Lee joined the band, practiced and performed with them, but the performances had to be repeated for filming. Lee would be the first to admit to the unreality of his show (Korbelik, 2004).

Tina Barta, who has appeared in three MTV reality shows, says you have to watch what you say when you are being filmed. She was called a racist on one of the shows because of something she said that was used on air. Barta claims her comment

was taken out of context, and the other contestant she was talking about was actually a good friend during filming. A couple on CBS' *The Amazing Race 5* was upset about how they were depicted. In one scene, one teammate, Colin Guinn, was shown yelling "I hate you!" at his teammate, Christie Woods, when he says he was yelling at the ox they were trying to get to move through a muddy field. Guinn said the participants' words were taken out of context several times an episode. He criticized producers for having no morals. Executive producer and co-creator Bertram van Munster says he forbids misleading an audience by editing or directing, yet other *Amazing Race* contestants have similar complaints (Poniewozik, 2006).

Korbelik (2004) found that some reality TV show participants welcome negative portrayals. *Survivor's* Jerri Manthey accepted being portrayed as a villain because it helped her career as an actress. She gained more publicity because of her depiction. Manthey was also on an all-stars edition of *Survivor*. This time she was not happy with how she came across on camera, as lazy. Manthey was booed off the stage of the reunion show. After going to the producer with her concerns, she realized that it was all about making money for the network. Manthey called the shows' producers puppet masters. She contends if people had to survive on virtually no food, as shown in the episodes, most would have died. After being on these shows, Manthey says that she cannot stand reality TV because she knows how unreal it is. It is only if you understand how unreal it is and watch it for entertainment value only, do you get it (Korbelik, 2004). Omarosa Manigault-Stallworth from *The Apprentice* is another example of portrayal paying off. Omarosa says every time she argued or conflicted with another contestant, the cameras were on, but when she was peaceful, they never filmed her. She was

vilified by viewers, but has gone on to a successful television career. Being the villain gave her exposure she would not have had otherwise, and she is pleased with how *The Apprentice* changed her life (Poniewozik, 2006).

Wife Swap on ABC has two women switch families for a few days with the idea that the women will learn what it is like to be part of a family very different than their own, causing each family to appreciate its members more fully. Steinberg (2005) found on *Wife Swap* that some participants have said that what they learned most about was reality TV and the liberties taken in the editing room. The producers use scripted drama more than viewers realize. The show was not based on the documentary style the women expected when they signed up for the experience. The conflict in one house between the swapped wife and her new husband was so bad the wife stayed in a hotel for the remainder of the shoot, a fact that was not revealed in the episode. Another time, a wife was asked to pretend to be sleeping for filming. The rules that are supposed to be written for the household by the new wife were actually written by a producer. Wendy Roth, co-executive producer of *Wife Swap*, said people are naïve about reality shows, and they are not documentaries. She said further that reality TV comes out of the entertainment division and that there is a certain amount of poetic license. One hundred hours of footage may have been recorded for one episode of *Wife Swap*, but only 43 minutes can be aired. Roth says the dissatisfaction the wives expressed over their episodes may result from a disconnect between how they see themselves and how others see them (Steinberg, 2005).

Poniewozik (2006) wrote that a technique known as Frankenbiting, editing different scenes together to make it appear that someone said something they did not was used in ABC's *The Dating Experiment* to make a contestant appear interested in a suitor. The producers asked the female contestant questions such as who is your favorite celebrity. They then removed the celebrity's name and replaced it with that of the suitor. Todd Sharp, a program consultant on the show, said this type of editing happens more often than viewers realize. Even viewers savvy enough to know that editing distorts the reality of reality TV have no idea how extensively it is used. Episodes are planned with the use of storyboards, scenes are constructed from footage shot days apart, quotes are created, and conflict is constructed. Story editors and segment producers are suing networks because they contend the Writers Guild of America should cover them. They are creating story lines and coaching interviews, but their exclusion from the union is necessary to preserve the illusion that reality shows are not written. Some producers are unwilling to admit the extent editing is used to create more interesting stories. One producer of *Laguna Beach* said the story was enhanced but still genuine. He contends they would never make something up (Poniewozik, 2006).

Besides Frankenbiting, several other techniques are used in reality television (Poniewozik, 2006). Misleading montage is created by editing different clips together to make it look like the subject had a reaction to someone or something. Fake settings have been used in various shows, including *The Apprentice*. The famous boardroom is actually a stage set. Many reality shows use confessionals where participants are questioned regarding events that just happened. Leading interviews can make conflicts sound more dramatic than they actually are. The overdub is used to put sound over

images that did not occur at the same time. On Fox's *Joe Millionaire*, sounds and captions were added to a scene where Joe and one of his dates disappear into the bushes to make it seem like they did more than kiss. These tricks may or may not fool viewers. A Time poll found 30% of respondents think reality shows largely reflect what actually happened, while 25% believe the shows are almost totally false. Although reality shows are promoted as more authentic than regular programming, most viewers take the term 'reality' loosely making it difficult to say that taking liberties with reality is a crime (Poniewozik, 2006).

Stanley Milgrim's famous psychology experiment on obedience was made into a film (Shouse, 2001). In the experiment, subjects were told by a scientist to apply electroshock to a person they could not see by pushing a button. Milgrim wanted to see how obedient people would be even if they could hear others crying out in pain. Because they could not see the person, most of the participants did not feel social responsibility towards the person being shocked and continued to apply ever-increasing levels of shock unexpected by even Milgrim himself. Despite cries of pain, the subjects continued to shock the other person if the scientist told them it was okay. The film, *Obedience*, a dramatized version of the experiment, is used for educational purposes to show the results of the experiment. Documentary is traditionally seen as informative and high-minded, yet the basis of a film such as Milgrim's is mere voyeurism. Another psychology experiment was slated to be made into a reality television show, Zimbardo's Stanford experiment where students simulated a prison with some students acting as prisoners and others acting as guards. The possible implications of the program led to

the project being halted. Zimbardo expressed concern that entertainment would be the overriding factor in the producers' minds (Shouse, 2001).

Are entertainment and social responsibility mutually exclusive (Murray & Ouellette, 2004)? In the past, television has been criticized for not maximizing its capacity to address difficult social issues (Gillespie, 2000). Certainly reality television, which can be frivolous or worse, deserves the same criticism. Even the shows that are more altruistic in nature, helping parents with their unruly children, building a new house for a deserving family, or making over someone's wardrobe, have many negative elements. Much like *Obedience*, reality television shows people at their worst. Many times, footage is edited so participants fit the desired roles of villain or mentally unstable, when they may not deserve such characterization (Kushman, 2002).

Reality Television and Society

Experts disagree on the impact that reality television has on society and whether any influence is positive or negative. Many media experts believe reality TV presents hurtful versions of reality to a growing audience because they are often mean and competitive. Real people are chosen for the shows, and viewers identify with the participants. They become voyeurs and find excitement in the ability to peek into another person's life. Many of the shows are competitive and promote winning no matter the consequences. Analysts contend reality television shows are ethically and morally reprehensible (Balkin, 2003). Besides the personality makeovers that happen as a result of editing, there are other social issues at stake. For instance, on dating shows such as *The Bachelor* and *Temptation Island*, participants are expected to act on sexual impulse in front of cameras and crew. Some camera placements (e.g., in the bedroom

or the seemingly obligatory hot tub) are more salacious than others. Viewers tune in expecting to see skin and sexual encounters. Are the cameras simply capturing common behavior, or are reality television shows influencing these behaviors? If the latter is true, what are the ethical responsibilities of reality television producers, directors, networks, and fans (Good, 2003)?

James Poniewozik (2003) believes reality TV is good for society. He writes that participants are good humored and they recover from their failings which showing others that they should at least attempt to follow their dreams. Reality television can encourage viewers to work for individual improvement and pursue the American dream, perhaps making the genre a benefit to society. Reality TV cannot compete with well-written fiction, yet it is quality satire (Poniewozik, 2003).

Viewers have different expectations of reality TV than they do in fictionalized dramas. The BBC's *The Office* became a smash hit and has now been recreated on NBC because its characters are very real, similar to something you would find on reality TV. The immoral behavior of reality television participants is not accepted the way similar behavior on fictionalized drama is because we are watching real people. Poniewozik (2003) contends that the participants are not hurt by their failings or the public embarrassment because they get over it the same way they would have if it had not been televised. Critics do not like that these people are able to deal with the embarrassment and move on. On the other hand, at least they attempted to follow their dreams (Poniewozik, 2003). Cultural criticism of these shows is based on the particular brand of celebrity being touted, famous for being famous (Brenton & Cohen, 2003).

People have varying definitions of reality TV. Some shows advertised as reality are more documentary in form. Take for example the 2000 show *American High*, a documentary style show about teens attending Illinois' Highland Park High School. They were filmed living their normal lives. Levin (2005) wrote that it was first sold as a reality TV show on Fox. *American High* was advertised as the most real reality show on television, that there were no lights, no crews, no rules" (Levin, 2005, p. 329). Producers believed that they could show that real people's lives are more compelling than producing another fictional program. However, due to low ratings, which may have resulted from competition against *Big Brother* in the same timeslot, Fox cancelled *American High* after only four episodes. Even so, *American High* won an Emmy for best reality series in 2000. PBS picked up the show in April 2001, and it became very successful for PBS. Although *American High* was advertised as the most real, it did not succeed initially. Something unique about *American High* is the use of participants' own footage. The students were given cameras and encouraged to film their lives. Many reality TV shows use diary cams to capture participants' reactions, but giving the teens the ability to film anywhere gave the show a unique perspective. When PBS picked up the show, they had to add material to make up for time taken by commercials when the program aired on FOX. Footage that had not been used in the initial episodes was compiled into extra segments that played at the ends of episodes. Some of this footage was most compelling, showing how much important material must be left out of documentaries due to time constrictions and themes (Levin, 2005).

Murray and Ouellette (1998) wrote that *America Undercover* is a similar show that did considerably better. This may be explained by the fact that it appeared on HBO

and its programming generally includes, and their viewers have come to expect, more adult language and more graphic depictions of violence and sex. Producers of *America Undercover* tried to blur the lines between documentary and reality by alternating between social issues and sex (Murray & Ouellette, 1998).

ABC's *Welcome to the Neighborhood* never aired, for reasons that are still unclear (Steinberg, 2006). Ten days before its premiere, ABC executives cancelled the show citing concerns that early statements made in the show would impact ratings. The show featured seven families competing to win a house by persuading their future neighbors to choose them. Of course, the families were varied, including a gay couple and their children, and a black family. Protests came from the National Fair Housing Alliance because their concerns that awarding a house based at least in part on factors such as race, religion, and sexual orientation would send the wrong message. The producers claim that the show, which would have criticized people's tendencies to prejudge people, was itself subject to prejudgments. From the social experiment point of view, the show was a success even though it was never viewed publicly. One of the neighbors was outspoken in his views about homosexuality and was reluctant to give the gay family a chance. In the end, the gay couple won the house, and the homophobic man revealed that his son is gay and he had changed his views because of the experience (Steinberg, 2006).

Reality TV has affected other cultural realms such as literature. James Frey's popular memoir *A Million Little Pieces* was revealed to be not completely true. Readers may have felt deceived by the scandal, but the fake memoir is resulting in an increase in the demand for reality (Ayres, 2006). Selling nonfiction has become easier than selling

fiction because of the rise in popularity of reality television, documentaries, blogs, and televised trials. Ayres (2006) wrote that these outlets have devalued fiction. The year 2005 saw the biggest fall in attendance at the movies in two decades. The only growth was in feature-length documentaries (Ayres, 2006). In addition, there has been an increase in fiction titles based on reality TV shows such as Andrea White's *Surviving Antarctica: reality TV 2083* about a group of reality television contestants who reenact Scott's expedition to the South Pole.

Even fictional programming is affected by reality TV. Fox's popular drama *24* about counterterrorism has critics who say the show reflects the public's appetite for torture. The main character uses a variety of torture techniques on each show, promoting unethical and illegal behavior. The line between reality and fiction has been skewed. *24* is popular among American soldiers in Iraq who may be getting the wrong idea from what they see. While it is just entertainment, even the star of the show admitted he is worried about the unintended consequences of *24* (Mayer, 2007).

Reality Television Viewers

Early reality TV shows were seen as harmless and good-humored, while critics of today's shows find them ethically and morally reprehensible. Network statistics show that 12 to 17 year olds say three of their four favorite TV shows are reality shows. Participants are often asked to perform stunts that may cause them physical harm, and the chance of emotional harm is often great on competitive shows. Superficial characteristics are glorified on many of these shows (Balkin, 2004). Reality TV was once thought to be a trend, but it is becoming more and more clear that it is here to stay.

It is doubtful viewers realize how artificial reality television shows can be. The unreality of reality TV is becoming increasingly more evident as it reaches its peak. As more and more people experience being on television, the number of people who know someone who has been on one of these shows increases. The “secrets” of staging and editing may change viewers’ beliefs about how unfeigned these shows are. A significant way to know how different viewer perceptions are from the truth is to interview participants and viewers and compare their views on how unscripted the shows are. It is possible people do not believe in the strict authenticity of these programs and find them purely entertaining, yet the popularity still lies in the fact that these are bona fide people being watched.

Reality television is clearly a form of storytelling even though its basis in veracity is what seems to make it so intriguing to viewers. One technique used to lend credibility to reality TV shows is the routine questioning of participants about their “experience” (Balkin, 2004). These debriefings usually occur on the morning news shows after the contestant has been eliminated from the show or after the show is over. Do these inaccuracies affect viewers, or do they regard this form of entertainment as just another drama with lesser-known actors? What impact does reality television- the competition, rivalry, and sometimes deceit of the participants- have on our society? Or do the shows’ participants seem too far removed for viewers to think of them as actual people? The predominance of reality television seems to come from its realism, but its artificial elements, including casting, editing, and concocted situations and storylines, are what make it so popular.

Reality Television Participants

The number one reason people try out for reality TV is they want their 15 minutes of fame. When asked why they applied, many respond that they always wanted to be on television. For a few participants, reality TV turns into a career. This happens less and less now that reality shows have multiplied and the number of participants has grown. The celebrity shelf life of reality TV has dwindled since CBS first aired *Big Brother* (Kushman, 2002). Kushman (2002) wrote that there are two major mistakes people make when thinking about what being on television will be like. People do not realize the camera lies, and being on TV rarely changes your life. Producers are trying to achieve good ratings so they promote emotion, sex, and strife because these are the chief ingredients of dramatic television. TV does not allow for context; therefore, everything said on television has more impact. Words are taken out of context to give them more punch. Halfhearted comments in real life can sound very different on camera. Some of the women portrayed on *Sorority Life* will be pleased with the way they look on screen but most will not. Some will be made into villains in the editing room because every show needs a villain. The negative image could easily affect the woman after the show has aired and she has gone back to her day to day routine. The only thing that fame really changes is a person's ability to make money. Kushman (2002) believes that although the sorority women have probably seen enough reality TV to know what they are getting into, they cannot know fully what to expect.

Andrejevic (2004), a communications professor at the University of Iowa, teaches a course about reality TV. He asked a contestant from ABC's *The Bachelor* why she developed feelings for the bachelor during the course of filming. She said she had to in

order to stay on the show. To win the competition, the participants must internalize the goals of the producer. The “fake” reality becomes real to those being filmed. They live in confined circumstances, and their world becomes that of the show. Andrejevic (2004) believes viewers know what they are watching is not real, but they are trying to find the reality. It becomes a game trying to find the true moment among all of the fake ones (Korbelik, 2004).

Summary

Reality television has much in common with documentary. Like documentary, reality television has the power to change societal views on controversial topics. Madsen (1973) wrote that documentary films were originally created as pure film, but due to the influence of television, they now have narration and introductions and conclusions similar to television programs (Madsen, 1973). Just like reality television, documentary is open to a director’s influence. Reality TV is an established genre, and there is little chance that it will fall out of favor any time soon. However, the impact of reality TV has not been studied to any extent. Reality TV’s prominence in the American cultural landscape necessitates an in-depth analysis of its relationship to truth and authenticity and, in turn, its relationship to documentary film.

CHAPTER 3

PARTICIPANT/OBSERVER EXPERIENCE

Introduction

I became a participant observer of reality television so that I might gather data on the discrepancies between my experience (my reality) and “reality TV.” My experiences on reality television include two very different cable shows. I was filmed for *Faking It* for The Learning Channel (TLC) in February of 2004. The show first aired in June of that year and was repeated several times over the course of a year and a half. *Faking It* is a show where someone is taught a new profession, one very different from her own career. My episode, “Super Shy to Super Fly,” was touted as a librarian’s conversion to Coyote Ugly® (owned by Ugly, Inc.) bartender. Filming lasted three and a half weeks, and the episode was an hour in length, including commercials. *Faking It* started as a British production and was then produced by the same company, RDF Media, for TLC. The British version is very similar except the two professions are more similar. For instance, a classical musician was trained to be a dj. The American version looked for complete opposites when casting for a specific episode.

The second show I appeared on was *That’s Clever* on Home and Garden Television (HGTV). Filming was done in June of 2005, and the show first aired in October, 2005. *That’s Clever* features three artists or crafters, each demonstrating how to make a project in a six-minute segment, with one artist returning at the end of the episode to demonstrate another quick project. The entire episode lasts 30 minutes. The crew for *That’s Clever* visited my home and filmed my two segments in about six hours.

These two shows are very different in content and length, yet my experiences being filmed for each have significant similarities. It is because of my opportunity to participate in these shows that I found the basis of a research project.

Faking It

The following is a thick description of my time being filmed for *Faking It* along with commentary explaining what was used in the final cut and at what points I acted for the camera. I highlight the moments that were most poignant for me as evidenced by my ability to remember them two years later. The process of becoming a reality TV participant can be lengthy as was my experience with *Faking It*. I had considered applying for several shows and applied for *Survivor* several months before applying for *Faking It*. I heard nothing after submitting my application to *Survivor*. At the suggestion of a friend, I filled out an online application for *Faking It*. A casting producer contacted me fairly quickly. She asked if I knew a male librarian who would want to become a stripper. I responded that I did not, and then I was asked to complete a longer application and submit a photograph to be put on file in case an episode came up for me. I did not hear back from the production company, RDF Media, for a few months. The casting producer called and asked if I was still interested in being on the show and if I could leave for filming in a couple of weeks. We spoke a couple of times on the telephone, and I felt I was going to be chosen for this episode, to be a bodyguard in Los Angeles. Soon after, I found out a kindergarten teacher was chosen over me. The casting producer said she really liked me and she would get me onto a show, but I thought that my chance had passed. About six months after I initially submitted the

application, I was asked to write why I should be chosen for another episode. I had to make a video of myself answering questions about why I would be good for the show.

I began my reality TV career by incorporating a few falsehoods into the video to guarantee my position with the people casting the show. I made assumptions about the producers “reality.” From the little contact that I had had with someone from the production company, I knew they were looking for the stereotypical librarian to makeover. At the time, I worked in an off campus annex of the University of North Texas Library. I did not have the title of Librarian but worked in a paraprofessional position. I went to the main library and had myself filmed doing “librarian” things such as shelving books and answering questions, although truthfully I worked all day at a computer in a cubicle not interacting with the public. I wore glasses in the video even though I always wear contacts, and I made sure my clothes and hair were “librarianish.” To me “librarianish” means well covered, a little frumpy, and sensible shoes. I wore a long skirt and a colorful sweater that was too big for me.

After submitting the tape, I had to provide photos of me baring my midriff. I did not know what the episode would entail. It was obvious they were looking for someone in good shape because it would not be possible to completely transform a person in one month. The casting producer told me I was one of two people they were considering for the episode. I was sent a twenty-page background check and contract to complete and mail back immediately. Soon after, the producer of the episode called to congratulate me on my selection. It was at that point I was told I would be going to New Orleans to learn to be a Coyote Ugly® bartender. Of all of the things I could have been chosen to

fake, this was something I really did not want to do, but I understood that fact would make for good TV.

The producer, Sara Mast, gave me a lot of information in that first phone call. What made the biggest impression on me was her emphasis on the show being “scripted reality.” She explained there would only be one camera for most of the filming so the crew would be limited in what they could capture. There would be many takes, and I would be expected to repeat my words and actions. Sara said the days would be very long. I would be in New Orleans three and a half weeks, during which time I would live with one of my two Coyote Ugly® mentors. The producer and assistant producer, Dan Messinger, would fly to Texas and film me at work before going to New Orleans. Sara told me not to have my hair cut before the shoot. RDF Media paid for my flight, and each week I was given a small stipend for food along with a nominal salary to cover what I would lose for taking a month off from work. Before filming began, I received the “Faking It - Bible”, a document outlining RDF Media’s expectations of me (see Appendix A for an excerpt).

My first meeting with Sara and Dan occurred February 1, 2004. They scouted the location, my home at the time, for filming the next day. They had asked me to come up with an outfit to wear for filming. When they saw my clothes, they declared them too trendy and said they would buy me something if there was time. We went to dinner and I showed them possible places to film such as the University’s main entrance and a field with long horn cattle. At dinner they talked about what we would do the next day and the outfits I would need to assemble.

Feb. 2: The crew, including Sara, Dan, a cameraman and a soundman, arrived at my home early the next morning. From that day on I had to get used to wearing a microphone. Depending on my outfit, the battery pack would be either attached to the back of my pants or strapped around my chest. At first I did not appreciate the soundman sticking the microphone to my chest, but I had no choice but to accept it. They had asked to film me doing a hobby, making glass jewelry, so that was first. They also filmed me reading in bed. We had to move anything in the shot that might be copyrighted, including a poster hanging on the wall behind my bed. Likewise, I could not wear clothing with brand names in clear view. The last shot was of me leaving home with a suitcase. I had to start inside the house, pull my suitcase outside, shut the door, and walk down the driveway. We repeated this shot many times. Of all of this footage, the only shot included in the episode was my reading in bed.

Figure 3. Filming at the Annex.



The next location was the annex where I worked. The crew set up to film me at my desk. One of the first things to happen was smoke and a fire alarm going off because a light blew out. The building was evacuated, and we all stood outside waiting for the fire department to arrive and turn off the alarm. This put a cramp in filming for the day because time was lost. Once back in the building, I had to push a book cart to my desk several times. Sara asked me questions while I sat at my desk working. I had a cold so my voice was extra soft. In the final product, being sick made me seem more shy and quiet. The next scene involved an interview with some of my coworkers who had agreed to be filmed. They sat at a table in the break room and Sara questioned them about what I am like and if they thought I'd make a good Coyote Ugly® bartender. They were supposed to pretend to be doing a puzzle together, a "librarian activity." I was allowed to stay for the filming, but Sara said later she should not have let me watch. I think I distracted my coworkers. Of the six people who were filmed, only two appeared very briefly in the episode.

After that, the crew and I went to campus to film me walking into the main library. They used my idea to make it look like I really worked in a library rather than in an off campus building. I had to walk into the building about five times, varying my speed each time. I remember being told to walk a certain speed to one point and then speed up until I was in the building. The crew went inside and filmed me walking into the library. We did that many times. Once inside, they had me pretend to shelve books. I talked about working in the library as I shelved. Librarians do not shelve books at that library, student workers do. Being on campus was my first experience being filmed in front of strangers. I soon learned to ignore people who stopped to watch. We had a break at some point,

and I was interviewed further while sitting outside on a bench. Later, the producer was upset with the camera and soundmen because they had gone on break and had not returned. I sensed something was going on, but I did not know what.

The last scene in the library involved my standing behind a reference desk while students asked me questions. The crew asked several students in the library to participate. They were given questions to ask, and I acted like I was answering them. Dan came up once and asked me where to find books on science. My reply was, “what kind of science?” We did this repeatedly until two girls came to the desk. They did not look like the other students; they had long hair and wore lots of makeup. One girl’s shirt was completely sheer, and the other was carrying a CD player. They asked me where they could find books on dancing. I had been prepped perfectly because I said, “what kind of dancing?” One of them said, “this kind of dancing.” The CD player was turned on; they jumped onto the counter and started dancing, first clogging, and then dancing suggestively. I knew when they walked up they were not students, but I was surprised when they danced on the counter. This is one of the few moments in the show where filming captured my true feelings. I was deeply surprised and embarrassed. After a few minutes of dancing, they got down and introduced themselves as Tara and Chantel, my Coyote Ugly® mentors. They flew from New Orleans to take me back with them. Of course, after all of this was done, we had to reenact the whole thing. The noise upset students especially when Tara and Chantel danced two more times. After this the girls talked to me briefly. Then they went outside to be interviewed, and I was interviewed about what just happened. Tara and Chantel returned to New Orleans. Dan and Sara flew to New Orleans the next day, and I left the day after that.

I had been asked to bring clothes to wear for the filming, specifically old clothes that were too big for me because I had recently lost weight. I was to wear these clothes until makeover day. Sara also said she wanted me to wear my glasses until the makeover, which would be two weeks into filming. Because I was used to wearing contacts, I decided to fool the crew by replacing my prescription lenses with non-prescription ones. I wore my contacts, and it worked; the crew never knew the difference. I felt it was a good decision on my part because I was expected to dance on the bar, and my depth perception is impaired even with the glasses. I flew to New Orleans wearing the same clothes I had on the day of the Texas shoot.

Figure 4. Arriving in New Orleans with Chantel (left) and Tara (right).



Feb. 4: Sara and Dan met me at the New Orleans airport. There had been some problems getting permission to film inside so we filmed outside only. The cameraman and soundman were locals. Nancy and James, two other employees of RDF Media, had joined Sara and Dan. With the exception of the final shoot, the crew consisted of these

six people. Tara and Chantel were present, wearing the clothes they had on in Texas and pulling suitcases to make it look like we had flown together. As was the case throughout production, we had to repeat the scene several times. We would walk down the sidewalk and have a conversation about what was about to happen. During the month we were not given exact words to repeat (except on a few occasions), but Sara always suggested what our conversations should be about. I never actually saw a script, but I would not be surprised if she had one. Chantel and I were taken to her apartment where I would be staying. We spent a lot of time filming a scene where she reviewed my clothes and decided them unfit for the bar. She loaned me clothes to wear, which was ridiculous because we wore very different sizes. Of this footage, only a glimpse of my arrival at the airport was used.

The next scene was my first time going to the bar. This was my first experience waiting for the lights and camera to be set up. From then on, I felt like an actor waiting for my scene to be ready. I became well acquainted with the coffee shop next door. Unlike some reality TV shows, I was allowed contact with the outside world. I had a cell phone and Internet access much of the time. Sara said once that I really should not be calling friends and family, but she was not going to enforce the rule. My first experience at Coyote Ugly® was a mixture of real emotion and acting. I was supposed to walk in with Chantel and then be dragged onto the bar with Tara to be made fun of. She made me tell everyone I was a librarian. Tara said I was a rookie and I would be washing dishes all night. I never actually worked at the bar all night, except one time and that was off camera. Tara started to write “rookie” on my arm with a marker, but Sara stopped her because doing so would have prevented Sara from using the footage out of

order. That first night I also met Liliana “Lil” Lovell, the founder of Coyote Ugly®. She made a speech about how Coyote Ugly® is an empowering experience for women because they are the bartenders and make the experience of Coyote Ugly®. She talked about why there are bras hanging everywhere and how women customers come there and feel free.

After this shot, I was taken back to Chantel's where a diary cam was set up in my room. It seems obvious that a “set” had been created for the diary cam by its position in the room. I was told exactly where to sit on the bed so that the art that Sara had put up in the room would be behind me, making a nice looking scene. I was expected to talk to the camera every night and say what had happened along with how I felt about the experience. Sometimes I did not have time to do the diary cam so I filmed myself the next night making up for two nights. On these occasions, I changed into the clothes from the night before to make it look like I had done it the same day as the experience. I felt I was diligent about talking to the camera every night, but at some point Sara said I was not saying enough about how I felt and I needed to talk more. Although one of the reasons they chose me for the episode was my shyness, this was the major problem the producers had with me. Sara was always asking me to talk more and to talk louder. She could not understand why that was difficult for me to do.

Some days I was picked up at 9am and returned to the apartment after midnight. Other days involved only one or two scenes. I did not have my own transportation so I relied on James to take me wherever I needed to go. Each day, Sara told me how many outfits to bring. I had to keep up with my “costume” changes and remember what I had worn in case we filmed two parts of the same scene over a two-day period.

Feb. 5: Day 2 of the filming involved one scene in the room above the Coyote Ugly® bar. We used this room for many different scenes throughout the month. The object of the scene was my first lesson in freestyle dancing. Coyote Ugly® bartenders are expected to entertain the customers by dancing on the bar, using both freestyle techniques and choreographed routines. Chantel was my instructor; however, she and Sara disagreed about the dance class. Chantel said she did not really know how to teach someone to dance freestyle; she believed it is something that just comes naturally to you. At this point, they really did not know if I could dance or not. I remember Sara and Chantel arguing and my not knowing what to do. Sara asked me to show them how I dance, and I did some very silly dances to make it look like I did not know how to dance. Chantel finally agreed to help me. This was one of many times I pretended to be bad at something for the sake of the story. I knew I had to go from being a stereotypical librarian to something very unlike a librarian for the story to be interesting. Sara said the first time we met that I needed to look dorky at the beginning so I would look better at the end. I told her that as long as I looked really good at the end, I would go along with it. It seemed to me there would have been a major problem if I had not played along. I am guessing that the production garnered the success it did due to my willingness to act for the camera.

Feb. 6: Day 3 of shooting was devoted to B-roll footage. B-roll is filler, typically scenery, used throughout the show. The crew was always going out to shoot B-roll around New Orleans. That morning I was shot in a variety of locations, walking around New Orleans and practicing my dance moves for later that night. Even though I was given a stipend for food, I almost always ate with the crew. I spent much more time with them than I did

with my mentors. My first bartending class was with Tara that afternoon. She taught me about the different liquors and how much to pour. She was genuinely surprised I knew so little about alcohol, but I pretended to know less than I do. That night I worked at Coyote for the first time. I had to dance freestyle on the bar with Tara. I also had to use the microphone to yell at bar patrons. They thought I danced well but I needed a lot more work on the microphone. Dancing while being filmed was always difficult because we could not use the music that was actually playing on the jukebox because of copyright limitations. Sara had music she was planning to use in the edited version. She made us dance to this music instead. This became a point of contention between her, the mentors, and eventually me as well because the music was never loud enough, and it was not what we considered the right kind of music to dance to. After dancing on the bar, I was interviewed outside. Sara always praised me for my interviews. I certainly felt more comfortable speaking directly to the camera in these situations because she asked me specific questions.

Feb. 7: Day 4 I was given a break while the crew scouted locations and shot B-roll. I went to the bar with Chantel and worked a few hours. Some of the footage shot on Days 3 and 4 were used in the final production.

Figure 5. Dancing on the bar for the first time with Tara.



Feb. 8: Day 5 I was taken to the gym to workout with Chantel. I was told that being in good shape was very important to being a Coyote Ugly® bartender. Chantel was supposed to show me different exercises, but Sara upset me because she wanted me to act like the exercises were difficult when, in fact, I was in better shape than Chantel. I ended up showing her some exercises. Chantel said she would take me to the gym with her on days we did not shoot, but we never went. The gym footage was not used. We shot more B-roll that afternoon.

Figure 6. Shooting B-roll.



Feb. 9: Day 6 started at the Café du Monde with Tara, Chantel, and myself. After waiting for Sara and Dan to work out a deal with a street performer in the background, we had beignets and talked about the rest of the month. They reiterated how difficult being a Coyote Ugly® bartender is and how hard I needed to work. Some of this conversation was included in the final product. My first clogging lesson was that afternoon with both Tara and Chantel. I was given a pair of thrift store boots that were too big for me. I grew up clogging, so even though Coyote Ugly® clogging is a little different than what I knew, I picked it up right away and started showing them some new steps. At the end of the lesson, like the end of every shoot, Sara interviewed me on camera. The clogging had been really easy for me, but I said on camera that it was difficult. It seemed to me that it would not have made sense for me to be good at clogging without them explaining that I had clogged for 10 years prior to this experience.

That evening I attended a bartending class to receive a license to legally serve alcohol in New Orleans. I was filmed in the class, but the footage was not used. Afterwards, I was taken to a karaoke bar with Tara, Chantel, and a couple of other Coyote's to celebrate my passing the license exam. It was supposed to be a big surprise when they dragged me on stage to sing "When the Saints Go Marching In." I was unhappy I had to do this and acted like I did not want to do it, but I quickly started singing and dancing. At the end of the song Tara took me outside to talk to me away from the crowd. She said I should have done a better job, and in order to succeed at being a good Coyote I would have to entertain the crowd. I was surprised because I thought I had done a fairly good job and because Tara had been so positive towards me until then. The crew commented off camera that I have a good singing voice. After a second unprovoked scolding later on during filming, I realized that part of reality TV is conflict and Sara might have prompted Tara to say those things. This scene was included in the final cut. Afterwards we danced at another bar, but that footage was not included in the final cut.

Feb. 10: Day 7 some B-roll was shot before another clogging lesson that ended up being cancelled because Chantel was ill. Several shoots were cancelled during the month because she was ill. I overheard the crew say that Chantel was being difficult because the filming was not what she expected. That evening we dressed in the same clothes we wore the night before and went to a restaurant to have the dinner that was supposed to take place before the karaoke scene. My shirt was stained and missing a button by this point. The meal and conversation were filmed but none of the footage was used in the show. I worked at Coyote Ugly® for a couple of hours after dinner.

Feb. 11: My makeover was supposed to be the following week, but Tara and Chantel insisted I needed the makeover as soon as possible so I would start feeling like I fit in. Chantel and I went to a clothing store. We went through several different looks, including schoolgirl and cowgirl. Sara preferred the plaid skirt and knee socks, but Chantel and I agreed the denim skirt with boots looked best. I also tried on several silly outfits including a 70's costume with wig. A lot of footage from the store was shown in the final product. The next stop was a spa where I was given a rub on tan. I was embarrassed the crew filmed this, but luckily the tan was not mentioned on TV let alone shown. At this point I was able to stop wearing glasses, although I still wore them in some of the diary cam logs for believability. This change was not mentioned in the episode either. The next step in my makeover was a salon to have my hair cut and colored. I was initially very unhappy with my haircut because my bangs were left long and in my eyes. In fact, I almost cried. I said I could not keep it that way, and Sara agreed. They cut it a little shorter and brushed the bangs aside. Make-up was done last. Much of this footage was shown with the exception of my being upset. I was pleased with the final look even though I felt self-conscious in the tight short clothing.

Figure 7. During the makeover.



Figure 8. After the makeover.



That night was the Coyote Ugly® anniversary party which is a big invitation only party. I was to clog on the bar with Tara and Chantel and work a while. The clogging number went well, and I had caught on to serving drinks and ringing up sales. I was actually having fun, and a lot of the regulars commented on my transformation. Just when I thought everything was going so well, Tara announced to the bar that I was going to be given a challenge. I had to sell 10 bodyshots in an hour or spend the night in a New Orleans cemetery. Bodyshots are when alcohol is poured on the bartender's stomach for a customer to drink. I was very much against doing this. I soon realized this was an impossible task. I was forced to do it once and really hated it. I told the camera I would rather spend the night in the cemetery than do it again. This was not shown in the final cut because I was supposed to be upset about spending the night in the cemetery. Also, in the episode, the narrator said it took 45 minutes for me to sell one bodyshot when it really only took about 5 minutes. Despite my challenge failure, Lil and Tara gave me positive reviews in their interviews afterwards because they were impressed with my dancing, bartending, and new look.

Figure 9. Outside Coyote Ugly during the anniversary party.



Feb. 12: Day 9 I was taken to the French Market to hand out Coyote Ugly® flyers. We spent more than an hour waiting for a filming permit with nothing for me to do except stand around with my shirt tied up and be very cold. When we were finally ready to shoot, I was supposed to go up to people, ask them if they had been to the bar and tell them what a great time they would have there. Not many people were at the Market that morning, and I really disliked approaching people. Sara kept prompting me with what I should say. Eventually, a man walked by, and I told him about Coyote Ugly®. He talked to me for a minute before revealing that he was going to be my acting coach. We repeated the scene a couple of more times for the camera. Then we went to a theatre for my first lesson, the focus of which was the necessity of creating a character for me to be while working at the bar. The Market scene and the lesson were in the final production.

Our next stop that day was a voodoo shop where I met Bloody Mary, a voodoo high priestess. She blessed me and gave me good luck charms. Then we went to one of the oldest cemeteries in New Orleans. Mary and Tara went with me and left me in front of a crypt of two children that had been broken into. Tara was really scared of the cemetery, but I thought it was a lot of fun. I could not bring myself to pretend that I was scared. After filming the first part of the cemetery scene, we went to dinner and waited for dark. When we went back to the cemetery, they gave me a camera and a walkie-talkie and told me I would be there for an hour. James was waiting outside the cemetery with the other walkie-talkie if I needed him. I set up the camera and talked to it for most of the hour. I followed Mary's instructions to sing and threw candy to the children's crypt. I talked about my experience so far and how I was enjoying the peace and quiet of the cemetery as opposed to the noise and smoke of the bar. After an hour, James found me and we left. Nothing from the voodoo ritual or the cemetery was used in the final cut. I cannot help but feel it was not used because I did not act according to plan.

Feb. 13: The crew always tried to keep me from knowing what was going to happen next so I would be surprised when the time came to shoot. However, because I spent so much time with them, it was difficult for the crew to keep everything from me. When I went to the hotel where the crew stayed, they would hide a particular poster board. On one occasion, they forgot to hide it and I saw that it was a storyboard with acts and scenes all laid out. There was a big surprise shoot for me in the evening of Day 10. We went to an Asian restaurant where, in an upstairs room, several women in belly dancing costumes waited. They taught me briefly their style of belly dancing and dressed me in a costume similar to theirs with makeup and jewelry. I danced with them in their weekly

performance at the restaurant. It was one of the scariest things I did during the month, but it was my favorite. The women in the troupe told me I was a natural, and I think the crew and my mentors saw that I could dance. Unfortunately, none of the footage from that day was used in the final cut.

Feb. 14 & 15: I had day 11 off. On day 12, we were supposed to film again at the gym, but that was cancelled. My first shoot of the day was in the afternoon with Tara and another bartender named Bill. Bill was supposed to teach me flaring, or juggling the alcohol bottles and cups to entertain customers. Tara observed the lesson from the other side of the bar. It was obvious from the first time I tried to flare that I was a natural. Tara was upset and said that I was clearly not a faker. She said she was starting to think the joke might be on her. Bill was also impressed with my ability. Sara asked me to drop the practice bottle a few times for filming, and I did. The lesson was substantially included in the final episode, but it was edited to make it look like I had a hard time at first but eventually improved. Every shot of me dropping the bottle was used. At the end of the scene, Bill says that I seem to be a bit of a natural. In fact, he said this at the beginning of shooting, not the end.

That evening we went to Slidell, Louisiana, about 30 miles from New Orleans. I was very nervous because I had no idea why we were going there. Tara took me to a small hole in the wall bar called The Chicken Drop. She was cagey about what was going to happen there, and I was afraid I was going to have to catch one of the many chickens running around. It turned out that the bar regularly has a contest where a chicken is put on a grid of numbers and whoever guesses the number the chicken poops on wins. My mission was to dance on the bar and get the crowd to like me more

than the chicken. I got up on the bar and danced. The crowd was very big and rowdy and some people booed, but in the end I had more people cheering for me than the chicken. I also rode down the street on a motorcycle with one of the bar's regular customers. The chicken contest was shown in the final cut but the motorcycle ride was not. There were some continuity problems during the dance scene in the episode. At first I am not wearing a cowboy hat, then I am wearing one, and then I am not wearing one again. Back in New Orleans, Tara and I were taken to her apartment and filmed getting ready to have dinner and a sleepover. This was omitted from the final cut.

Feb. 16: The next day Tara took me shopping and to have my nails done. Our first shoot of the day was supposed to be me learning the choreographed dance, but it was cancelled because permission to learn the dance had not yet been granted. Coyote Ugly® choreographed routines are protected, and only their bartenders are supposed to learn them. That evening at Chantel's apartment we were shot having dinner together with Tara and their giving me a makeup lesson. We talked about inventing a back story for my character so I would be confident in adopting this new persona. We went to the bar after dinner so I could do the weekly water dance with Tara and Chantel. While I danced, they poured cold water on me. This was one of the most unpleasant moments of my Coyote Ugly® experience. No footage from Day 13 made it into the episode.

Feb. 17: Day 14 started with another acting lesson at the theatre. I spent a lot of time practicing projecting my voice and creating a back story. I was unhappy with trying to talk louder. I also had to pretend to work behind a bar while serving a difficult customer. A little bit of this was shown in the episode. I also had another flaring lesson. I moved on

from using the practice bottle to using glass bottles. I should have been tested that day on the choreographed routine. Instead I was filmed working at the bar.

Figure 10. Final flaring lesson with Bill.



Feb. 18: I had a break the next day except for working at the bar. There were only two instances when I was allowed to keep my tips. I was told I would be paid for working at the bar, but the manager did not agree to this. It was around this time I was finally taught the choreographed routine. I have never been good at remembering the sequence of dance steps so I wrote the steps down and tried to memorize the order. I had a CD with the music and spent as much time as possible practicing the dance.

Feb. 19: On day 16, I was taken to Bourbon Street for B-roll. Ryan, my acting coach, was there. I had to direct foot traffic on Bourbon Street by yelling to people on the other side. I had beads to give people for crossing the street. At first, no one would follow my directions. Eventually people started listening, and I had several men do what I told them. We went to a different location, and I gathered a crowd for a yelling contest. The crowd voted who did better, me or a woman I chose from the crowd. The first woman

won against me so I chose another one and did it again. I won the second time. Some of these exercises were shown in the final product. By this time I was very tired and hungry. Most days, we did not eat at regular times and we rarely ate healthy food. I suspect now that this was a tactic to make me unhappy and encourage conflict. It worked that particular day. That night I practiced the dance alone until it was time for me to perform it on the bar for the camera. I was rushed into the bar, and the music started immediately. I did not realize they wanted me to dance right then so I got up there and did not do the best I could. Sara was yelling at me from the ground to try harder, and I got upset. We went outside for an interview. I told her I would do better if they told me what was going on. We went back inside, and I did the routine again, this time doing a much better job. They used the footage to make it look like I was really tired from working and having a hard time meeting the challenges of being a bartender.

Feb. 20 - 23: I had a break the next day. Day 18 coincided with one of the busiest days of Mardi Gras so I sold beers at the bar. No film of this was used, but I was able to keep the tips from one hour of work. On day 19, I went to the bar and acted as if I had worked there all night and slept upstairs like the other bartenders do during Mardi Gras. On day 20, Sara and I spent the whole day riding on a float in the Orpheus parade, one of the biggest Mardi Gras parades in New Orleans. This was my reward for beating the chicken in Slidell. We had to get there early in the day to get our costumes and to set up our beads. The parade started late because of rain. Once we finally got going and the rain let up some, Sara filmed me throwing beads from the float. The parade itself took about three hours. It was a once in a lifetime experience, but the rain and long hours were not fun.

Feb. 24 - 26: Day 21 was Fat Tuesday. Mardi Gras ends at midnight on Fat Tuesday. The bars close at midnight and everyone is made to leave the French Quarter. We went to Bourbon Street that night to film the streets being cleared. On Wednesday we finished putting my final outfit together. I wanted to wear jeans, but Sara insisted a skirt would look better. I had a spray tan that day in preparation for the final test. On day 23, I had my final session with the acting coach at the bar. I practiced on the microphone, which everyone considered to be my weakest skill, and was lectured numerous times about having confidence in myself. We went back to see Bloody Mary for a final blessing, but this too was cut from the final production.

Feb. 27: Day 24 was the last day of filming. There were two additional cameras and extra crew for this shoot. The final test had two parts: an interview and a two-hour shift. Three actual Coyote Ugly® bartenders participated in the final test with me. In the final episode the narrator tells where the other bartenders are from, NY, New Orleans, and Austin. None of the girls was from NY, and the one that he said was from NY was actually from Austin. The other two were from New Orleans. This change was probably made to make the test more interesting. Three judges were there to watch and determine which one of us was the faker. In my interview, the judges questioned why I became a Coyote bartender and what my favorite experience had been at Coyote Ugly®. I felt fairly confident with the interview, but I was uneasy about my appearance. My hair and makeup were done professionally, and I was wearing a skirt when the other girls were wearing jeans. I thought I stood out from them, but, although Sara agreed, there was little to do about it. The interview portion was cut completely from the episode.

The bar was different than I had seen it before. There were cameras on cranes and extra lights; to me it looked like a movie set. The bar also seemed different because the test occurred before it opened for the day. We filmed from 11am to 1pm, but in the episode it looks like we were working at night. I had been told that during the final shoot I had to act like I did not know the crew or the customers. Sara had invited everyone we met during filming so it was very difficult to pretend I did not know anyone when, in fact, I knew almost everyone. Tara, Chantel and Ryan sat upstairs and watched everything on closed circuit TV's. We were being judged on several variables including dancing, bartending, tips, and personality. I served drinks and made sure to flair bottles. I danced freestyle on the bar, and we performed the choreographed dance twice. I also lit the bar on fire as I was taught to do. Coyote Ugly® bartenders get customers to buy them drinks. I do not drink alcohol so I had the customers buy me kamikaze shots which have very little alcohol in them. By the end of our shift, one of the girls seemed to be very intoxicated. She started dancing with me and making a big deal out of how great I was.

At the end of the shift, I waited at least an hour before I could go upstairs to hear the results. I was told what a good job I had done, but two of the three judges had chosen me as the faker. I lost. I was disappointed but encouraged by the mentors' comments that I really had made the transformation. There were several factors that led to my detection, including my skirt, makeup, and the attention paid to me by one of the bartenders. I also think the cameras focused on me more than the other girls. In addition, the judges knew beforehand that there was a faker in the group. One of the judges had been filmed for another episode of *Faking It* and knew what to look for. Despite being picked as the faker, I was voted second best Coyote in all categories. I

was happy with this result because the girl with the highest marks was, to my mind, unbeatable. When my real profession was revealed to the judges, they were all very surprised.

After the results, I changed clothes and met the others outside the bar for the final shot. Tara, Chantel and I were shown walking down the street together. They gave me a bracelet that is for Coyote Ugly® bartenders only, although that was not shown in the episode. We said our goodbyes, and I got in the van with my suitcase. While I was driven around the block, Sara interviewed me about the final test and my overall experience. This was used as the last shot of the episode before the credits. The next day Sara and Dan took me to the airport to return to Texas.

I was told 75 hours of footage was shot for a 42-minute episode. I was present for most but not all filming. The only times I was not there were b-roll shots of the bar and New Orleans, interviews with Tara and Chantel, and interviews with the bartenders from the final challenge. I was on screen for approximately 36 minutes and 15 seconds. I filmed myself for the diary cam, on average, every day for 5 to 20 minutes. Only 31 seconds of the diary cam were used in the show. Less than 1% of the total footage shot was used in the show.

Faking It is unlike reality TV shows with bigger budgets. We had one camera most of the time resulting in scenes having to be repeated in order to capture them from different angles. Almost every time I did something with my hands- pour drinks, flare, wash glasses- close-ups would be taken of what I was doing. Again, I had to repeat the motion several times while it was filmed from different angles. I learned the routine quickly and repeated actions as necessary. One of the most surprising things for me

was seeing how a scene was setup prior to filming. I am sure on larger productions that the lights and cameras are set up before the participants arrive. Because I was dependent on the crew for transportation, I was always there when the equipment was being arranged, if not helping them with it.

While my actions were real and my own, the shoots were very calculated. Sara would, on occasion, offer us lines when we were not saying what she needed us to for that particular shot. I tried to put Sara's lines into my own words rather than simply repeat what she said. There were instances when I acted for the camera and did things I would not have actually done, like dropping the flaring bottles or dancing silly. I always kept in mind that we were trying to make a good television show so I tried to cooperate as much as possible. The story needed an arc to interest viewers, and I was willing to play up the librarian stereotype at the beginning to make my transformation at the end that much more impressive.

Reviews of the show on the Internet make me think I succeeded. According to Sara, my episode of *Faking It* was the highest rated of the season. TLC has a discussion board for many of their shows, and all comments about me were positive. I found four blog entries in which the authors expressed amazement at my transformation. They also said they were rooting for me to win the final test. One blogger in particular wrote that I inspired her to be less shy (www.topbit.co.uk). Another blogger wrote, "This show might be a hoot, and a holler, but I'm more than a little disturbed by how it perpetuates the superficial stereotypes that the profession has tried to kick to the curb" (infoediface.blogspot.com). When I watch the show now, I am amazed I was able to do everything I did because I was nervous every day. I think I was

able to accomplish the producer's goals because I internalized her vision for the show. It was also easier to do what Sara wanted than to fight for something different. At one point, I told her I did not think viewers would believe I learned so much in just three and a half weeks. However, the editing of the show evidently made it believable.

I communicated with Sara after the episode aired, and she asked if I was happy with it. While I was disappointed some footage was left out, I thought the story was good and that it was a good episode. My character was compelling. I could see how viewers would be pulling for me. I watched the show for the first time with 50 friends, and it was exciting to see their reactions. They were surprised by what I had accomplished and were impressed with the show. I feel like reality TV made me a bit of an actress. My actions on the show were real, I performed them, but they were not always my own. I think nearly all of the conflict was instigated, but it made the show more interesting to viewers. I am glad I had the experience and it gave me invaluable insight into reality television.

Table 1 shows the *Faking It* shooting schedule as planned by Sara. I obtained this schedule after the filming was complete.

Table 2 is the schedule shown in Table 1, but the footage that was not used in the final production has been removed.

Table 1

Faking It Shooting Schedule

P:\FAKING IT US - 13\SARA/ Librarian - Coyote Ugly Last printed 3/9/2004 9:45 AM

<div>Jan/Feb</div>						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Thu	Fri	Sat	
1 Dan/Sara Leave Texas AM Tara/Chantel flies Texas	2 SHOOT 8AM Texas Shoot University Library Town B roll Home T/C FLY New Orleans	3 Scout Bar Chantel's-Set-up Paintings C Diary cam P.up lights	4SHOOT12:30PM 2 Airport Orleans 4 Chantel's house- clothes C 6 Coyote Bar – Rookie – MIC T/C/LIL	5 4-7 Dance Freestyle- Upstairs C	6 SHOOT 11AM 11 B-roll H Lunch 3 Bartending 101 T 6 Dinner 7 Coyote- 1 st time Dancing/Mic	7 crew off scout – clothing/shoes - Muriel's Salt Bayou Airport Haley trains/ works on her own
8 Shoot 12 Gym C 2 B roll 6:30 Dragons Den Haley works T	9 SHOOT 12:30 1-3 Café / b roll 3-5 rehearsal - clogging- Bar C 6-9 Bar School 10:30-1 Razoo's, Meow, T/C/plus 2	10 Shoot 12 B-Roll Town? 2 Clogging plus 2 – H/C Muriel's 4pm T/C plus 2 Haley works	11 SHOOT 9 K 9-11 Clothes C 12-1 tanning T 1-4 Hair/Make-up 5-9.PARTY-LIL Shot/Clogging	12 SHOOT 10AM 10 Flyer/Drama 12-2 Stage 3-5 Voodoo C 5-6 Cemetery H/C Dinner 8-10 Cemetery	13 Scout 1-3 Kathey/Aaron/ Dave Light 4pm 5 Bellydancing C/T	14 Off Lunch Kathey 1:30 Bid Final Test
15 SHOOT 11AM 11-1Gym 1:30-3 Flaring -T Bill 3:30 Drive Slidell 6pm Salt Bayou 11 Tara sleepover	16 SHOOT 12PM 12:30-1:30 B roll 2-4 Learn final- Salvation C 4-6 dinner make- up/Backstory C/T 8-11 Coyote – Waterdance	17 SHOOT 10AM 10 planes land? 12-3 drama w. actors 3-5 flaring - bill 5-7 Final rehearsal - Final Haley works	18 crew off Haley Works	19 SHOOT 1PM 1 B-roll Bourbon 3-5 Drama – Bourbon/traffic 5-7 rehearse - troupe 8 Mardi Gras Shift Final - Challenge?	20 crew off Scout tan Plantation tour	21 shoot Pd 170 5-6PM Coyote Beer tub plus tips MOM'S BALL
22 Shoot AM girls asleep Swamp tour 1pm Craft service Beer tub	23 Shoot 11-8 Orpheus Augustus Convention Center Load Jason list-	24 Shoot Fat Tuesday 8PM B ROLL 11PM Sonesta 12 clear streets	25 Shoot Ash Wednesday Final B roll Haley costume 3pm tan	26 SHOOT 10AM 11-2 Bar/ Drama coach T/C 2-3 B-roll T/C 3:30 Mary's – Lafitte's Bar 5:30 Donna	27 FINAL 6-4:30 CREW- 2 Addtl. Cameras 1 Addtl. Sound 1 Gaffer//1 utility Jason/TD/First AD 5 pa's FAREWELLS BAR	28 Shoot 10AM Return Gear Haley 1pm FLY Sara/Dan Fly 4

Table 2

Faking It Footage Used in Episode

P:\FAKING IT US - 13\SARA/ Librarian - Coyote Ugly Last printed 3/9/2004 9:45 AM

Jan/Feb						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 SHOOT 8AM Texas Shoot University Library Town B roll Home T/C	3 Scout Bar	4 SHOOT 12:30PM 2 Airport Orleans 6 Coyote Bar – Rookie – MIC T/C/LIL	5 4-7 Dance Freestyle- Upstairs C	6 SHOOT 11AM 11 B-roll H 3 Bartending 101 T 7 Coyote- 1 st time Dancing/Mic	7
8 Shoot 2 B roll	9 SHOOT 12:30 1-3 Café / b roll 3-5 rehearsal - clogging- Bar C 6-9 Bar School 10:30-1 Meow, T/C/plus 2	10 Shoot 12 B-Roll Town?	11 SHOOT 9 K 9-11 Clothes C 1-4 Hair/Make-up 5-9.PARTY-LIL Shot/Clogging	12 SHOOT 10AM 10 Flyer/Drama 12-2 Stage	13	14
15 SHOOT 11AM 1:30-3 Flaring -T Bill 3:30 Drive Slidell 6pm Salt Bayou	16 SHOOT 12PM 12:30-1:30 B roll 2-4 Learn final- Salvation C	17 SHOOT 10AM 10 planes land? 12-3 drama w. actors 3-5 flaring - bill 5-7 Final rehearsal - Final	18 crew off	19 SHOOT 1PM 1 B-roll Bourbon 3-5 Drama – Bourbon/traffic 8 Mardi Gras Shift Final - Challenge?	20	21 shoot
22 Shoot	23 Shoot 11-8 Orpheus Augustus Convention Center Load	24 Shoot Fat Tuesday 8PM B ROLL 11PM Sonesta 12 clear streets	25 Shoot Ash Wednesday Final B roll	26 SHOOT 10AM 11-2 Bar/ Drama coach T/C 2-3 B-roll T/C	27 FINAL 6-4:30 CREW- 2 Addtl. Cameras 1 Addtl. Sound 1 Gaffer//1 utility Jason/TD/First AD 5 pa's FAREWELLS BAR	28 Shoot 10AM

Tables 3 and 4 show the order in which scenes were filmed. A scene number is given along with a short description. Time shot indicates the number of hours that were spent setting up for a scene and shooting it. The time used is the amount of time each shot is featured in the final product. Reference is the starting point for that shot in the episode. “-” indicates that the footage was not used in the final production.

Table 3

Filming Schedule vs. Final Production, Part 1

Scene	Description	Time shot	Time used	Reference
1	Haley at home	2:00:00	:01	:17
2	Working at annex	2:00:00	:23	1:43, 2:18
3	Coworker interview	45:00	:05	1:37
4	On Campus	3:00:00	:27	1:10
5	Airport	1:00:00	:02	4:11
6	Chantel's house	45:00	-	-
7	C.U. first time	2:00:00	3:46	4:22
8	Dance freestyle class	1:00:00	1:56	13:40
9	B-roll with Haley	1:00:00	:02	4:20
10	Bartending 101	2:30:00	:42	12:26, 13:05
11	C.U. dancing/mic	2:00:00	1:36	16:35
12	Gym	1:30:00	-	-
13	B-roll with Haley	1:00:00	-	-
14	Café	1:00:00	1:55	11:30
15	Clogging rehearsal	1:00:00	:29	12:35
16	Bar school	1:00:00	-	-
17	Cat's Meow	45:00	1:26	14:37
18	Razoo's	45:00	-	-
19	Muriel's	2:00:00	-	-
20	Clothes shopping	1:00:00	:30	18:12, 18:35
21	Tan	1:30:00	-	-
22	Hair/makeup	2:00:00	:28	18:12, 18:35
23	Anniversary party	3:00:00	3:05	19:13, 42:54
24	Flyer/drama coach	4:00:00	2:16	25:38

Table 4

Filming Schedule vs. Final Production, Part 2

Scene	Description	Time shot	Time used	Reference
25	Voodoo	1:00:00	-	-
26	Cemetery	1:30:00	-	-
27	Bellydancing	3:00:00	-	-
28	Flaring	1:00:00	1:09	30:16
29	Slidell	3:00:00	2:01	31:26
30	Tara's	30:00	-	-
31	B roll with Haley	1:00:00	:02	:15
32	Dinner/back story	2:00:00	-	-
33	Water dance	1:00:00	-	-
34	Drama w/actor	2:00:00	1:07	29:08
35	Learn final dance	1:30:00	:59	28:08
36	Bourbon St./drama	2:00:00	2:44	40:15
37	Dance rehearsal	1:00:00	-	-
38	Final challenge	2:00:00	1:35	43:24
39	Beer tub	30:00	:01	43:00
40	Sleeping	30:00	-	-
41	Orpheus parade	1:00:00	:37	33:28
42	B-roll	1:00:00	:05	58:46
43	Tan	30:00	-	-
44	Practice at CU	2:00:00	3:58	38:41
45	B-roll	1:00:00	:07	48:52
46	Mary/Lafitte's bar	1:00:00	-	-
47	Final	6:00:00	9:06	48:59
48	Farewells	1:00:00	:47	58:07

Tables 3 and 4 contain evidence supporting my belief that there was a discrepancy between my experience and what aired on TV. That so little of the footage was used and the order it was presented in points to a disconnect between my reality and the “reality” of *Faking It*. Table 5 shows the order the scenes were used in the show.

Table 5

Scenes Shot vs. Order Shown

Scene	Description	Reference
31	B roll with Haley	:15
1	Haley at home	:17
4	On Campus	1:10
3	Coworker interview	1:37
2	Working at annex	1:43
2	Working at annex	2:18
5	Airport	4:11
9	B-roll with Haley	4:20
7	C.U. first time	4:22
14	Café	11:30
10	Bartending 101	12:26
15	Clogging rehearsal	12:35
10	Bartending 101	13:05
8	Dance freestyle	13:40
17	Cat's Meow	14:37
11	C.U. dancing/mic	16:35
20	Clothes shopping	18:12
22	Hair/makeup	18:12
20	Clothes shopping	18:35
22	Hair/makeup	18:35
22	Anniversary party	19:13
24	Flyer/drama coach	25:38
35	Learn final dance	28:08
34	Drama w/actor	29:08
28	Flaring	30:16
29	Slidell	31:26
41	Orpheus parade	33:28
44	Practice at CU	38:41
36	Bourbon St./drama	40:15
23	Anniversary party	42:54
39	Beer tub	43:00
38	Final challenge	43:24
45	B-roll	48:52
47	Final	48:59
48	Farewells	58:07
42	B-roll	58:46

That's Clever

I applied to be on the HGTV show *That's Clever* in 2005. The application process was much simpler for this show. I sent in an application and picture and was contacted fairly quickly. I was told the crew would film at my house for six hours. I was chosen to film two segments: the main segment would consist of me making a fused glass butterfly pendant; and in the second segment I would make a glass sun catcher. I talked to the assistant producer a couple of times on the telephone. Each time he emphasized the need for me to bring out my personality for the audience. I had to submit to the producer detailed directions for the projects for filming purposes and to be posted on the HGTV Website.

The filming took place in my living room. I do my glasswork in the garage, but the producer decided after visiting my home the day before shooting that the living room would provide a better background. He asked if I could put something on the wall behind me so that night I bought and hung shelves to display some of my work. The crew consisted of a cameraman, soundman, producer, and assistant producer. The assistant producer used a smaller camera for much of the filming to get close up shots of my hands. The producer gave me a lot of direction. The process of making each piece was not filmed in order. Before filming, I made the pieces in all of the stages of the process because fusing would actually take many hours. While I was "waiting" for the pieces to fuse or cool, filler footage of my dog was shown.

That's Clever is less of a reality show and more of a documentary by nature. The crew came to my house and filmed me making art. I was given a lot of instruction as to what to say and how to say it. The producer wanted me to do a lot of silly things to

make the segments interesting, but I was unwilling to go along with everything. He showed some frustration at my stubbornness. They wanted my personality to come out, but it seemed like they were trying to create a personality for me. The producer was pleased I had experience being filmed before so I knew that I would have to repeat things. He asked me numerous times to speak up for the camera. I was pleased with the show, and how my pieces looked on camera. My two segments lasted a total of 9 minutes.

Summary

Although my two television shows were very different types of shows, the experiences held some similarities. A great deal of editing was employed in each, and a huge percentage of footage was cut. A lot of direction was given by the producers. Both gave me exact lines to repeat at some point during the filming. Scenes were used out of sequence in each final episode altering the reality of what really happened. My true personality came through very little because of direction and editing. Each of these experiences presents examples of how the reality of the participant was not the same as the “reality” presented to viewers. In my role as participant observer, I have not been negatively affected by my misrepresentation. I can only assume that one negative outcome from my portrayal on *Faking It* may have been the perpetuation of stereotypes, for both librarians and Coyote Ugly® bartenders.

CHAPTER 4

METHOD

Introduction

The thick description of my role of participant observer in *Faking It* and *That's Clever* yielded evidence of the discrepancies among my "reality," the production "reality," and the episode "reality." Although my description provides context, I cannot speak for other reality TV participants and viewers of reality TV. The following study was employed to gather the perceptions of other participants and of reality TV viewers.

Research Design

The study consisted of two surveys, one for reality television viewers and another for reality television participants, each collecting quantitative and qualitative data. In-depth phone interviews were also conducted with three participants. All surveys were collected through the Internet. There are several advantages to using the Internet to conduct surveys including the ease of finding subjects as well as the cost effectiveness. Limitations include coverage ability or how much of the general population is accessible through the Internet. Not all people have access to the Internet, but the number is increasing (Schonlau, Fricker, & Elliott, 2002). The survey instruments were developed for this particular study. Survey 1, the survey for the viewers, collected demographic information as well as information regarding the viewers' television habits and perceptions of reality TV. Respondents were self-selected. A link for the survey was posted to Internet forums where people discuss reality TV shows including Television without Pity, RealityTVtalk.com, RealityReel.com, Reality TV Planet, Yahoo groups for reality TV, and Reality TV World. Viewers of reality television shows were the target

population for survey 1. Forums were selected by their size; forums with more than 500 members were chosen. Survey 2, the survey for reality TV participants, gathered demographic information, and collected information about the participants' experiences as well as their perceptions of reality TV. Participants' email addresses were found through the Internet, and they were asked individually for their participation in the study. The in-depth interviews were conducted to gain further insight into individual's beliefs about reality TV.

Population

The intended participants for this study were very specific in nature, but it was important to obtain a sample representative of the general population.

Surveys

Convenience sampling was used to select the participants for Survey 1 based on whether or not they watch reality TV. This study only concerns people who watch reality TV. The survey was posted to Websites where people discuss the reality TV shows they watch (Television without Pity, RealityTVtalk.com, RealityReel.com, Reality TV Planet, Yahoo group for reality TV, and Reality TV World.) The link to the survey was provided, and participants then self-selected. Survey 2 was more targeted with emails being sent to people previously on reality TV shows. Participants were found through Internet searches based on show titles. Lists of participants can be found online with links to their email addresses or Websites through Google, Wikipedia, and MySpace. One hundred emails were sent to individuals requesting participation, and ten people took the survey.

In-depth Interviews

All reality TV participants who took the survey were also asked to participate in a phone interview. Two respondents agreed. My committee member Ben Levin suggested the producer/cinematographer that was interviewed. She was contacted through her father, a professor at the University of North Texas.

Random sampling was not possible for this study because specific groups of respondents were needed for the specific research questions. Participants for Surveys 1 and 2 were targeted, but in the end all respondents chose to take the surveys.

Purposive sampling was used to find the reality TV show participants so that a variety of shows would be represented. Attempts to find participants through other means were unsuccessful. Some participants are under contract after the show airs, and they cannot speak about their experiences. Production companies are unwilling or unable to provide contact information for people who were on their shows. Participants on major series are easier to find on the Internet than people who are on one episode. Shows on major networks have more coverage, and more information is available on their casts.

Sample Size

The sample size for each survey was based on the number of respondents. A multitude of Websites featuring discussions of reality TV can be found on the Internet. A Google search found the most popular ones including Fans of Reality TV, Reality TV World, and various Yahoo Groups. Thousands of people participate in these discussions. It is not possible to know exactly how many people read the forums because some accounts may be inactive, and there are new forums and discussions within those forums created every day. A Google search for reality TV forums yields 22

million hits. Eighty-three people chose to take the survey. For statistical purposes this is a sufficient number of participants. Finding people who had been on reality TV shows who were willing to fill out the survey was more difficult. Ten people chose to take the survey. While this is not a large group, their answers provided a good deal of information.

Surveys

An informed consent notice (Appendix B) preceded each of the surveys. The program used to collect the data does not collect personal data about the participants. Survey 1 was completely anonymous. In Survey 2, the show participants were asked for their names and email addresses for verification purposes only. Because the data was collected through the Internet, it was important to verify that the information was true. By finding individual email addresses to ask specific people to take the survey, authenticity was much more likely than by posting a survey and asking for only people who had been on shows to answer. The data is presented here anonymously to protect the reality show participants.

Part 1: Television Viewers Survey Questionnaire

A survey questionnaire was developed for use in this study (Appendix B). The survey was self-administered and the respondents self-selected. A link to the survey was posted to Internet forums with a short note asking for participation. The survey was hosted by a Website (www.Freeonlinesurveys.com) that collected the data and stored it for the researcher.

Instrument Design. Survey 1 consisted of 16 items intended to measure age and gender of the respondent, the respondent's exposure to reality TV, and his or her perceptions of those shows.

Reality Television Viewers Survey

1) I am at least 18 years old and give my informed consent to participate in this study.

Yes

No

2) Age:

18-30

30-40

40-50

50-60

60-70

Over 70

3) Gender:

Male

Female

An informed consent notice was presented before the survey. Question 1 asked for consent. Questions 2 and 3 are basic demographic questions.

4) What reality TV shows do you watch regularly?

Questions 4 through 10 were open ended. The subjects could give as short or as long of an answer as they wanted. Question 4 was used to determine what reality TV shows are popular among the sample population.

5) What television shows other than reality TV do you watch regularly?

Question 5 is important to determine if these viewers tend to like television shows in genres other than reality and if those shows are similar to the reality shows.

6) How do you define reality TV?

Question 6 asked for a definition of reality TV. Since there is no one accepted definition for reality TV the answers gave insight into what these particular viewers think defines reality TV.

7) Why do you watch reality TV?

Question 7 asked for the motivation behind these viewers' interest in reality TV.

8) Does the opportunity to discuss reality television shows with your friends or family influence your decision to watch the shows?

Question 8 was important to determine whether people watch reality TV for purposes other than entertainment, i.e. social opportunities that may arise from watching the same show as friends or family.

9) Do you participate in reality shows by voting for or against participants? Why or why not?

Question 9 was aimed at how involved the viewers get in watching reality TV. Do they watch shows that ask for audience participation? If so, do they participate?

10) Do you participate in activities related to reality TV beyond just watching the shows and voting, such as online discussions? Please explain.

Question 10 asked if the viewers have further involvement related to the shows other than voting such as participating in online discussions.

11) How close to reality do you think reality TV is?

Very close

Somewhat close

Neutral

Somewhat not close

Not close at all

Questions 11 and 12 were multiple choice Likert scale type questions. Question 11 dealt with how close viewers think reality TV shows come to actual events.

12) How much does the reality factor influence your decision to watch reality TV?

Very much

Somewhat

Neutral

Not much

Not at all

Question 12 was intended to determine how important the reality of the shows is to the viewers. Do they care if the shows come close to what really happened, or does it matter?

13) There are many different types of reality television shows (e.g. talk shows, challenge shows, makeover shows, game shows). Do you think that some of these are more “real” than others? Why or why not?

Question 13 was open-ended and an attempt to determine if viewers distinguish between types of shows that have non actors or real people as the main characters.

14) Would you like to be a participant on a reality TV show?

Yes, definitely

Possibly

Not sure

Probably not

No, never

Questions 14 and 15 were multiple choice questions. Question 14 was a Likert scale type question and was used to determine if viewers see themselves participating in a reality TV show.

15) Do you personally know anyone who has been on a reality television show?

Yes

No

Question 15 simply asked if the viewers know anyone who has been on a reality TV show.

16) Other comments:

Question 16 was given so that the viewers could give comments about the survey.

Survey 2, for the participants of reality TV shows, consisted of 25 questions including demographic questions, questions about the participants experiences on reality shows, and several of the same questions used in the viewer survey dealing with reality in reality TV.

Reality Television Participants Survey

1) I am at least 18 years old and give my informed consent to participate in this study.

Yes

No

Question 1 was multiple choice asking for the participant's consent.

2) Name:

3) Contact info (email is fine):

Questions 2 and 3 were used to verify that the participant was on a reality TV show.

4) Age:

5) Gender:

Male

Female

Questions 4 and 5 were demographic questions.

6) Show title/episode:

7) Date/s your episode aired:

8) Briefly, what was the show about?

Questions 6 through 8 dealt with the show that the participant was on.

9) How do you define reality TV?

Question 9 asked the participant to define reality TV for reasons similar to the viewer survey. The answers to these questions could be compared between the two surveys.

10) How close to reality to you think reality TV is?

Very close

Somewhat close

Neutral

Somewhat not close

Not close at all

Questions 10, 11, and 12 were Likert scale questions. Question 10 was the same question used in the viewer survey so that they could be compared.

11) How close to real life was your experience?

Very real

Somewhat real

Neutral

Somewhat not real

Not real at all

Question 11 was asked to determine how close the participant's experience on the reality show was to real life.

12) How accurately do you feel that the show captured your personality?

Very accurately

Somewhat accurately

Neutral

Somewhat inaccurately

Very inaccurately

Question 12 was important to determine how the participant felt about the way his or her personality was captured on screen.

13) Was the filming what you expected? Why or why not?

Question 13 was open-ended and asked if the actual filming of the show was what the participant expected.

14) How much did the editing of your show change the appearance of your experience?

Very much

Somewhat yes

Neutral

Somewhat no

Not at all

Questions 14 and 15 were multiple choice Likert scale questions. Question 14 asked for an estimation of how much editing changed what the participant actually experienced.

15) How pleased were you with the final product?

Very pleased

Somewhat pleased

Neutral

Somewhat displeased

Very displeased

Question 15 dealt with whether the participant was happy with what was presented to viewers.

16) Please describe how you were or were not pleased with the final product.

Questions 16 through 19 were open-ended. Question 16 gave the participant the opportunity to elaborate on his or her previous answer.

17) How was your experience real or not real? Please provide an example or two.

Specific instances from the participant's filming experience were requested in Question 17 to determine how real that experience was.

18) Did your definition of reality TV change after your experience? How?

Question 18 asked participants if their definitions of reality TV changed after they were on reality TV shows.

19) Do you think that your experience had any lasting affect on you or your life? Why or why not?

Question 19 was based on literature that suggests people who are on reality TV shows expect their lives to change because of the experience.

20) Would you consider being on another reality TV show?

Yes, definitely

Possibly

Not sure

Probably not

No, never

Question 20 was a Likert scale question that asked if the participants would consider being on another reality show.

21) What reality TV shows do you watch regularly?

22) Why do you watch reality TV?

23) What other television shows do you watch regularly?

24) There are many different types of reality television shows (e.g. talk shows, challenge shows, makeover shows, game shows). Do you think that some of these are more “real” than others? Why or why not?

25) Other comments.

The last four questions were open-ended. Questions 21 through 25 were all used in the viewer survey.

Part 2: In-depth Interviews

Three in-depth telephone interviews were conducted:

Irene McGee. She was a participant on *The Real World* in 1998. I asked the same questions on the Reality TV Participants Survey. As I conducted the interview, more specific questions arose. The participant had more of an opportunity to go off topic with the phone interview than with the survey questionnaire.

Chris Russo. He was a participant on *The Apprentice* in 2005. As was the case with Irene, I asked Chris the same questions on the Reality TV Participants Survey plus additional questions as they arose.

Jennifer Lane. She is a cinematographer and producer for reality TV shows. Questions were designed specifically for this interview concerning her roles in shows she has worked on along with her perceptions of reality in reality TV.

Pilot Test

Survey 1 was tested using a pilot study to see if the questions made sense and could be answered with ease. Ten reality TV viewers completed the questionnaire and then discussed the ease of use and readability. Some of the questions were reworded due to the pilot test results. Survey 2 used many of the same questions.

Survey Administration

The revised surveys were presented to potential participants in the Fall of 2006 through the beginning of 2007. Survey 1 was posted to forums for reality TV viewers, and Survey 2 was emailed to individuals who had been on reality TV shows.

Data Analysis

Survey Questionnaires

The data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The Likert-scale questions were open to descriptive analysis, while the open-ended questions were analyzed for context.

In-depth Interviews

Three in-depth interviews were conducted. The interviews were summarized and are included in Appendix C. The content of the interviews was used to add further detail to the findings of the survey questionnaires.

Research Questions

1. How do people define reality TV?

Question 6 in the viewers' survey and question 9 in the participants' survey collected data in support of this research question.

2. How close to reality do people think that reality TV is?

Question 11 in the viewers' survey and question 10 in the participants' survey were used to answer this question.

3. How involved are people in watching reality TV?

Questions 8, 9, and 10 in the viewers' survey speaks to this.

4. Why do they watch reality TV?

Question 7 in the viewers' survey and question 22 in the participants' survey asked the respondents this question.

5. Do people gather information by watching these shows.

By asking the viewers in question 7 and the participants in question 22 why they watch reality TV, this question was answered.

6. What can be found by comparing the experiences of reality TV participants to what the viewers think?

A comparison of similar questions between the two surveys yielded an answer to this research question.

Summary

The survey developed for viewers of reality TV was administered through discussion groups found on the Internet. Individual emails were sent to people who were on reality shows asking for participation in the reality TV participant survey. The in-depth interviews took place over the phone at the convenience of the interviewees. The two types of questions were analyzed through quantitative and qualitative methods.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Research Design

The Web-based surveys were created using a Website called Free Online Surveys. Once the survey was ready to be launched, a link was created automatically by the Website for distribution. The surveys were created so that each question required an answer. Respondents could not take the survey more than once unless they cleared their cookies from their individual computers. All questionnaires were found to be valid with the exception of one where someone entered random information into the answer boxes. The survey was only created in English.

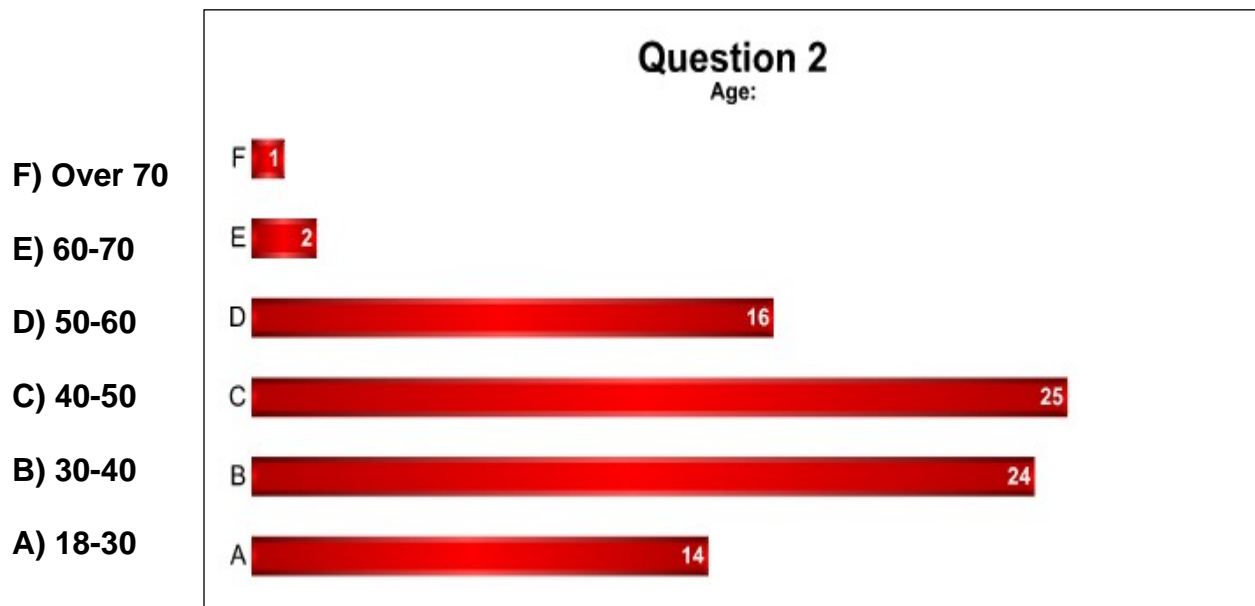
Data were collected from September 2006 through February 2007. The link for the viewer survey was posted to 10 reality TV forums. Individual email addresses were obtained for reality TV participants through Web searches, particularly Google, Wikipedia, and MySpace. An email asking for participation was sent to approximately 100 people who appeared on reality TV shows along with a link to the survey.

Population

Reality TV Viewers

Eighty-two people completed the survey aimed at reality television viewers. The mean age was between 30 and 40 with the ages ranging from 14 between the ages of 18 and 30, 24 between 31 and 40, 25 between 40 and 50, 16 between 50 and 60, 2 between 60 and 70, and 1 over 70. Sixty-eight women and fourteen men took the survey.

Figure 11. Age of subjects who took Viewer survey.



Reality TV Participants

Ten reality TV participants completed the survey. The mean age was 28, the youngest participant was 22 and the oldest 35. Six men and four women took the survey. The participants were on a variety of shows including two who were on more than one show.

Participant shows

- a. *America's Next Top Model*
- b. *America's Next Top Model, Surreal Life, My Fair Brady*
- c. *The Apprentice*
- d. *MTV Road Rules*
- e. *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*
- f. *Average Joe*
- g. *Big Brother 6*

- h. *Project Runway*
 - i. *The Apprentice, Battle of the Network Reality Stars*
 - j. *Beauty and the Geek*
-

Data Analysis

Reality TV Viewers

Viewers were asked what reality TV shows they watch. Table 6 gives all of the responses given by the viewers along with the number of times each show was mentioned.

Table 6

Shows Viewers Watch and Number of Times Each is Mentioned in Surveys

Show title	#	Show title	#
Survivor	32	Bridezilla	1
American Idol	26	Bringing Home Baby	1
Project Runway	24	Buy Me	1
Amazing Race	21	Clean Sweep	1
Top Chef	16	Dance Life	1
Big Brother	14	Dateline NBC	1
Dancing with the Stars	14	Deadliest Catch	1
ANTM	10	Dirty Jobs	1
Hell's Kitchen	9	Dr 90210	1
Rock Star	6	Driving Force	1
SuperNanny	6	Fame Games	1
The Apprentice	6	Fear Factor	1
What Not to Wear	6	Flavor of Love	1
Wife Swap	6	Forensic Files	1
Biggest loser	5	Gene Simmons Show	1
The Real World	5	Girls Next Door	1
Dog the Bounty Hunter	4	Growing up Gotti	1
Flip that House	4	Hidden Potential	1
So You Think You Can Dance	4	High School	1
Beauty and the Geek	3	Hogan Knows Best	1
Celebrity Fit Club	3	I love New York	1
Deal or No Deal	3	I wanna be a Soap Star	1
The Hills	3	Inked	1
Trading Spouses	3	Intervention	1
Two a Days	3	Judge Judy	1
Who Wants to be a Superhero	3	Kathy Griffin	1
Bad Girls Club	2	Last Comic Standing	1
Dog Whisperer	2	Maui Fever	1
Dr. Phil	2	Moving Up	1
Extreme Makeover	2	Mythbusters	1
Extreme Makeover Home Edition	2	Nashville Star	1
Family Jewels	2	Next Food Network Star	1
Grease	2	Oprah	1
House Hunters	2	Over your Head	1
Iron Chef	2	People's Court	1
Laguna Beach	2	Planet's Funniest Animals	1
Miami Ink	2	Property Ladder	1
Nanny 911	2	Real Housewives of Orange county	1
Queer Eye	2	Reunion	1
Road Rules Challenge	2	Runs House	1
Starting Over	2	Surreal Life	1
The Bachelor	2	The Bachelorette	1
1 vs. 100	1	The Junk Brothers	1
1st 48	1	The Simple Life	1
American Chopper	1	Top Design	1
Armed and Famous	1	Wedding Story	1
Baby Story	1		

Question 6 asked for the respondent's definition of reality TV. That reality TV does not use a script or is unscripted was mentioned by 33 of the viewers within their definitions. That "real" people or non actors are used in reality TV shows was mentioned 38 times.

6. How do you define reality TV? – sampling of responses (See Appendix D for complete results)

- a. Unscripted television shows.
 - b. Shows that feature real people instead of actors.
 - c. Unscripted television starring "regular" people
 - d. Real people, contrived situations.
 - e. Unscripted (officially) but manipulated by producers...People who are not (yet) professional actors cast into contests which are artificial situations created for drama, tension, competition and then producers observe and/or manipulate the interactions and film it to develop/create storylines for TV.
 - f. Not a lot of reality going on.
 - g. TV programs that are unscripted and look at people's genuine reactions in contrived circumstances.
 - h. Non-celebrity show with a prize for top contender.
 - i. They are almost like game shows, only you get to see all of the behind the scenes disagreements, etc. Basically drama.
 - j. Watching people who are not acting.
 - k. People put in certain situations and see what naturally occurs.
 - l. TV where the outcome cannot be predicted.
 - m. Any television show which is personality-driven, with a contrived situation in which the viewer is invited to be a voyeur.
 - n. Show where there are not necessarily writers coming up with the exact plot and dialogue but rather the individuals participating come up with their own words and the plot changes with individual responses.
 - o. No scripted storyline, no creative writing, plot or scene development.
-

-
- p. Rigged social experimentation using non-actors televised for public amusement.
 - q. Taking regular people and putting them on TV in contrived situations. It saves the stations a lot of money since they don't have to pay much for the "talent."
 - r. Viewing other people's problems firsthand.
 - s. Pseudo-documentary with the producers deciding what will bring the best return.
 - t. TV where you don't know what the outcome will be.
-

Question 7 posed the question, **why do you watch reality TV?** A sampling of the responses follows: (See Appendix D for complete results)

- a. The unpredictability.
- b. When it's done well, it can be compelling in a way that's quite different from scripted TV.
- c. Because truth can be stranger than fiction. I like to speculate what happened in the hours that ended up on the editing room floor.
- d. I like to watch regular people making fools of themselves.
- e. I watch reality TV for the same reasons I watch non-reality TV: distraction and entertainment.
- f. I like the insight into human nature they sometimes provide.
- g. Information and ideas, mostly.
- h. Unpredictable entertainment, authentic emotions shown.
- i. It's nice to feel involved with a "community" of sorts a group of other people who also follow the series-long plot.
- j. Because I like seeing how real people deal with real situations.
- k. Compelling people and storylines.
- l. I enjoy watching the competition.
- m. Drama.
- n. Enjoy seeing what other people are doing with their life.
- o. I like to see how these average people react.

- p. I enjoy knowing that real people are being depicted and real changes are happening to them.
 - q. I watch out of prurient curiosity, the “feel-good” story of transformation, the voyeurism, the desire for an “insider’s” look at a field like fashion design.
 - r. The drama – makes my life seem less complicated.
 - s. I typically watch with my teenager, and the shows provoke discussion about appropriate and inappropriate behavior.
 - t. You can sometimes see what’s coming on a sitcom or drama show, but reality is totally predictable. It’s also a reminder that we are all more alike than we are different.
 - u. To get away from made up people and places on TV and relate to real people.
-

The top reasons for watching reality TV were the ability to watch real people and for entertainment. Several people said they learn things by watching shows that give insight into fields such as fashion and cooking. Also, the unpredictability of reality shows is of common interest.

Viewers were asked in Question 8 if the opportunity to discuss reality television with friends or family influences their decision to watch the shows. Forty-one respondents answered yes, while forty answered no. Very few people gave more than a one word answer although the question was open-ended.

In Question 9, viewers were asked if they participate in reality TV shows by voting. Twenty-eight people said that they do vote. Fifty-two responded that they do not for reasons such as some watch shows that do not ask for audience voting, voting costs money sometimes, and some respondents are just not that interested in voting.

The results for Question 10, do you participate in activities related to reality TV beyond just watching the shows and voting, such as online discussions, were skewed

because the survey was posted to online forums that are intended for the discussion of these types of shows.

Figure 12 shows the results of Question 11, how close to reality do you think reality TV is. For Question 11, \bar{M} (82) = 3.05; \underline{SD} = 1.21. Thirty-two respondents believe that reality TV is somewhat close to reality.

Figure 12. Results to question 11 (viewers).

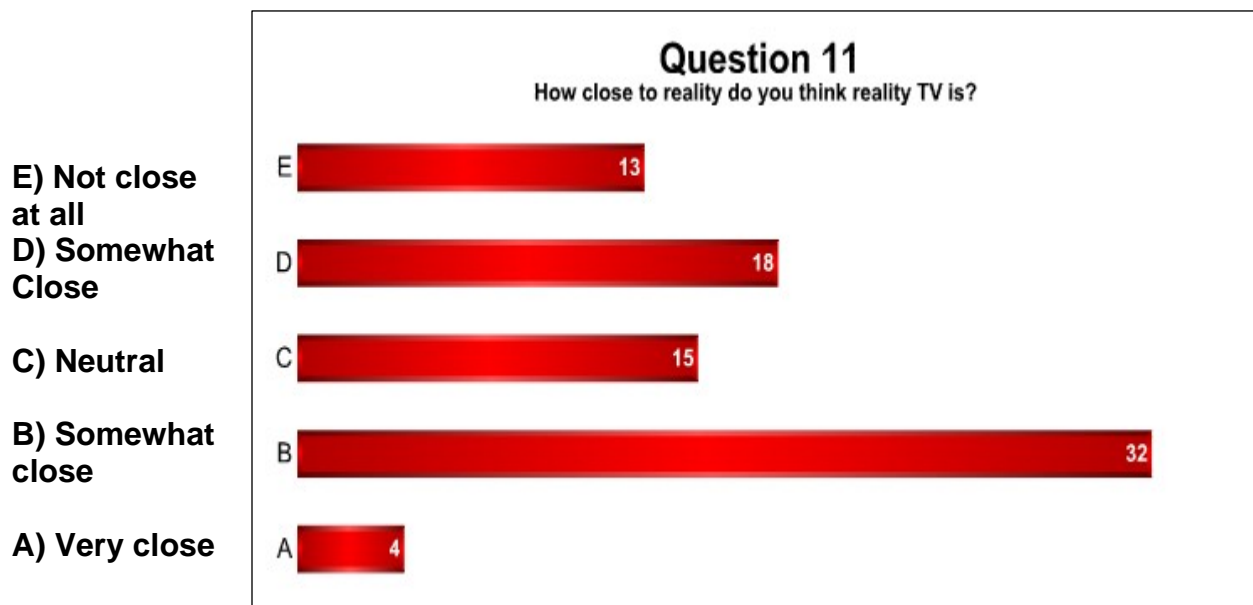
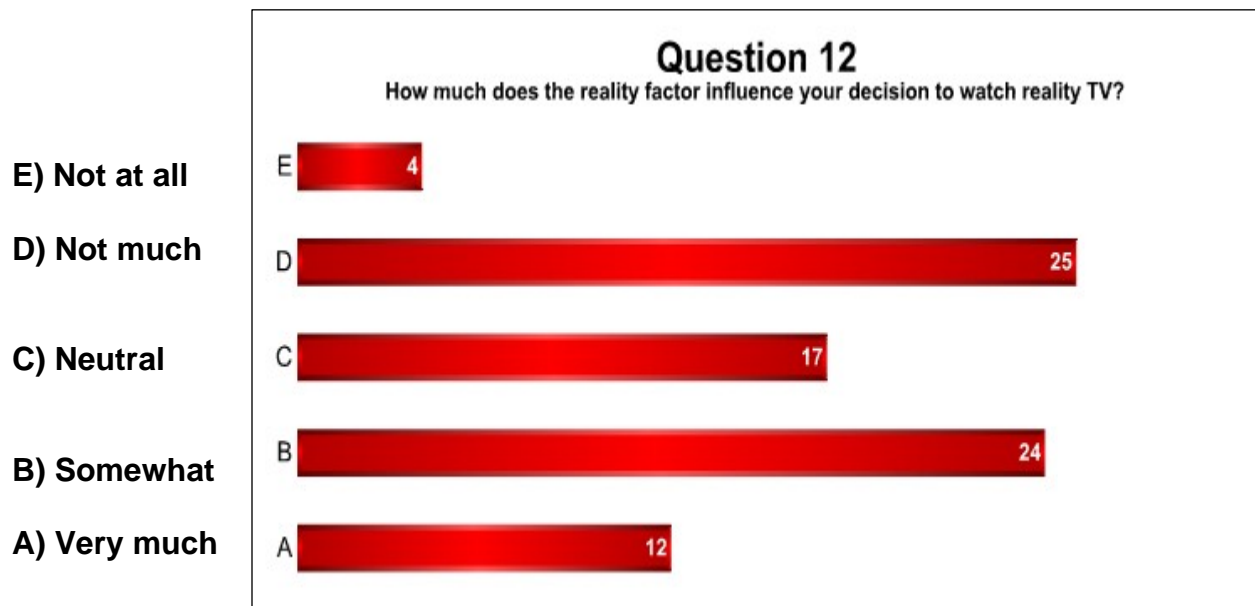


Figure 13 shows the responses for Question 12, \bar{M} (82) = 2.82; \underline{SD} = 1.67. The majority of respondents said that the reality factor contributes either somewhat or not much to their decision to watch reality TV.

Figure 13. Results for question 12 (viewers).



Question 13 was open-ended and asked if the viewers think some reality TV shows are more “real” than others. A sampling of answers follows (See Appendix D for complete results):

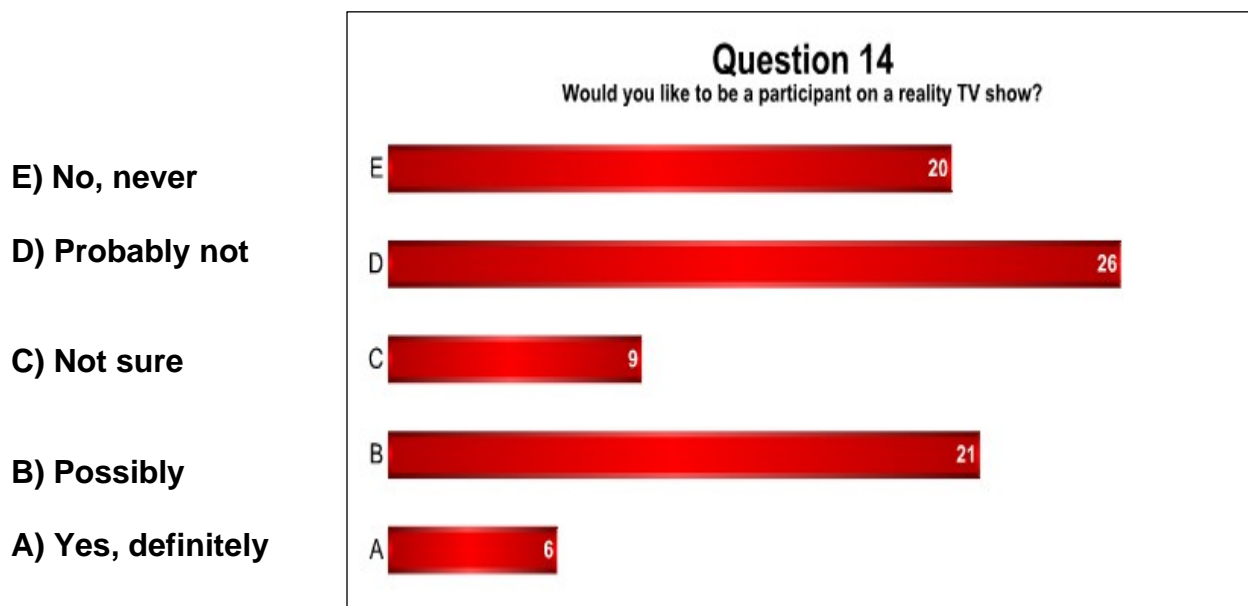
- a. Some shows seem more “real” than others because of the unpredictability.
- b. I think the challenge shows where there are tangible results are more real. Candid shows like *The Real World* seem to rely more on setting up situations to manufacture drama.
- c. Makeover shows are probably the most accurate because the “storyline” is simple and direct.
- d. I think every reality show is altered and/or distorted in some way to achieve the dramatic effect the producers want.
- e. Yes, I think there is a lot of staging to get the right reality.

- f. No. The reactions of the participants, under pressure is real even if the situation is less or more unusual or out of the ordinary.
- g. I think long-term investment shows are usually more “real.”
- h. Shows where people co-exist and have natural interactions, no matter how contrived the circumstances that brought them together, are the most real kind of reality TV.
- i. Yes, because some have been set up so the structure is almost like a script.
- j. They are all pretty much unreal.
- k. No, I think they are all real.
- l. Shows dealing with medical miracles, crime solving, I believe are more real.
- m. Yes, some have very contrived circumstances, and others are completely the result of editing. But the end results can be very real and I expect life changing.
- n. It varies from show to show.
- o. Challenge and makeover shows are more “real” than others.
- p. They all have an element of reality, but the level of reality is very dependent on the choices made by the show’s producers.
- q. For me it is not a matter of how “real” it is, but what is real for me.
- r. Makeover shows might be more real, some challenge shows, but who knows, we only see a small amount of what is actually filmed.
- s. Absolutely. First of all, reality shows with celebrities are not true reality shows. No-name people tend to be more real and their flaws are exposed on TV.
- t. You could never really have a total reality show.

Figure 14 shows the responses to Question 14, $M(82) = 3.40; SD = 1.30$.

Twenty-six people said that they would probably not like to participate in a reality TV show, but 21 said they would possibly be interested. Many more people, 20, gave a definite no response compared to 6 who said yes, definitely.

Figure 14. Results for question 14 (viewers).



Thirty-two of the television viewers said they know someone who has been on a reality TV show versus 50 who do not.

The last question, question 15, gave the television viewers to add any comments. Some of the responses were of interest:

a. I think that most reality TV shows have a shelf life. Once participants have seen the show, they act differently and the show becomes less real, less fresh.

b. People think reality TV is for idiots. Some reality TV is trashy, but some of it is really smart and riveting.

c. Like regular television shows, there are trashy reality TV shows and there are great reality TV shows. You just have to judge for yourself.

- d. One major problem with the reality TV industry is that so many of the shows are based in and around LA, which leads to a homogenous group of people and locations.
 - e. The more I think about it, the less I know how to define reality TV. Reality TV always has a level of unreality, however, there is hardly anything on TV that doesn't have a level of unreality to it. My definition of what reality TV is could actually include the news because sometimes it certainly seems that news reporters are taking regular people and staging them for likely reactions so they can have a sound bite to contribute to the way they are planning to cover the event.
 - f. I cannot stand the ones that eat bugs or humiliate people. I think these shows are a copout for the broadcasters because they can't come up with entertainment anymore.
 - g. I enjoy seeing other people's problems and then realize I am okay and not bad off.
 - h. I think people enjoy seeing ordinary people rather than perfect-looking actors all the time, and they like imagining how they would act in similar situations.
 - i. People are getting tired of things being too commercial in music, movies, and now TV.
-

Independent films and record labels are gaining more popularity, as are reality TV shows. Viewers want to see real people make mistakes and learn how they deal with their flaws.

Correlations between questions were calculated using Pearson's correlation coefficient. An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests. A significant correlation was found between questions 11 and 12, how close to reality do you think reality TV is, and how much does the reality factor influence your decision to watch reality TV. People who think that reality TV is closer to reality are more influenced by the

reality factor, $r(82) = .375$, $p = .001$. People who think that reality TV is more real are more interested in being on a reality show, $r(82) = .325$, $p = .003$. A significant relationship was found between age and question 11, how close to reality do you think reality TV is. The older the viewer the less real they believe reality TV is, $r(82) = .240$, $p = .030$. Also, a significant correlation was found between age and desire to be on a reality TV show. Younger viewers were more interested in participating than older viewers, $r(82) = .300$, $p = .006$. A negative correlation was found between how real people think reality TV is and if they answered yes to knowing someone who had been on a reality show. Although the correlation was not significant, $r(82) = -.051$, $p = .650$, it is interesting to see that people who think it is real are less likely to know someone who was on a show.

Reality TV Participants

9. How do you define reality TV?

- a. Like watching rats in a controlled cage.
- b. Reality TV is either 100% raw, or 100% fake. Either way, it is 100% edited.
- c. Unscripted television drama.
- d. A big mess.
- e. The next way to cure our lives of boredom. Another excuse to have people sit on their couch and not live their own lives.
- f. Not exactly reality...more of scripted hyper-reality. Emotions are real in fabricated and seeded situations.
- g. I don't watch it, since being on one you know it's not really "reality."
- h. Part game show...part documentary...part voyeur...part exhibitionist.
- i. An edited version of reality.
- j. A highly edited version of real life that shows whatever qualities, best or worst, that the producers think will make the show successful.

Figure 15 shows the reality TV show participants responses to Question 10, $M(10) = 3.20; SD = .79$. Four respondents indicated they believe that reality TV is somewhat not close to reality, 4 felt neutral about the question, and 2 think reality TV is somewhat close to reality.

Figure 15. Results for question 10 (participants).

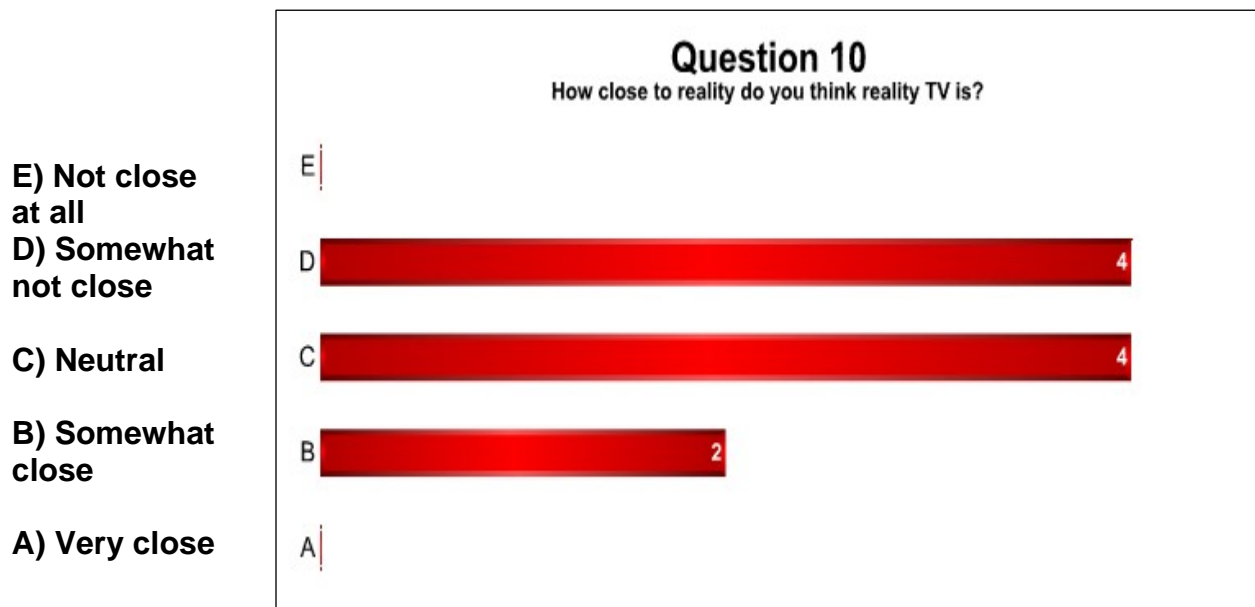


Figure 16 shows how close to real life each participant felt that his or her experience was. The answers of the participants ranged from not real at all to somewhat real with half of the respondents choosing somewhat real.

Figure 16. Results for question 11 (participants).

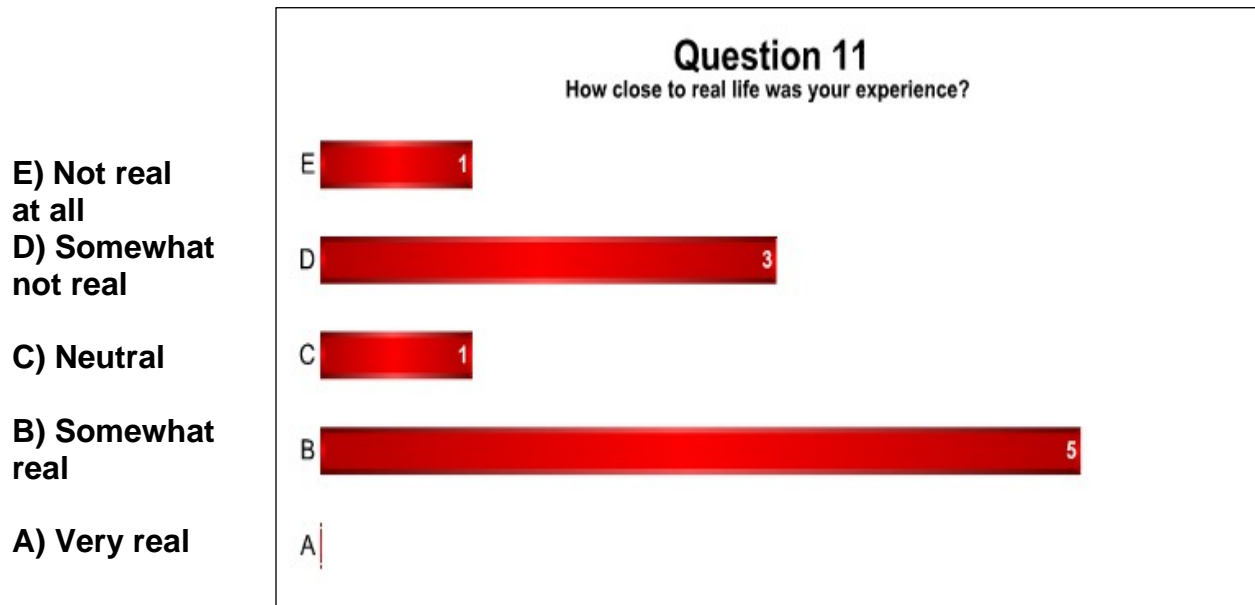


Figure 17 shows that at least one participant chose each answer for Question 12, $\bar{M}(10) = 2.70; \underline{SD} = 1.25$. Half of the respondents felt that their personalities were captured somewhat accurately.

Figure 17. Results for question 12 (participants).

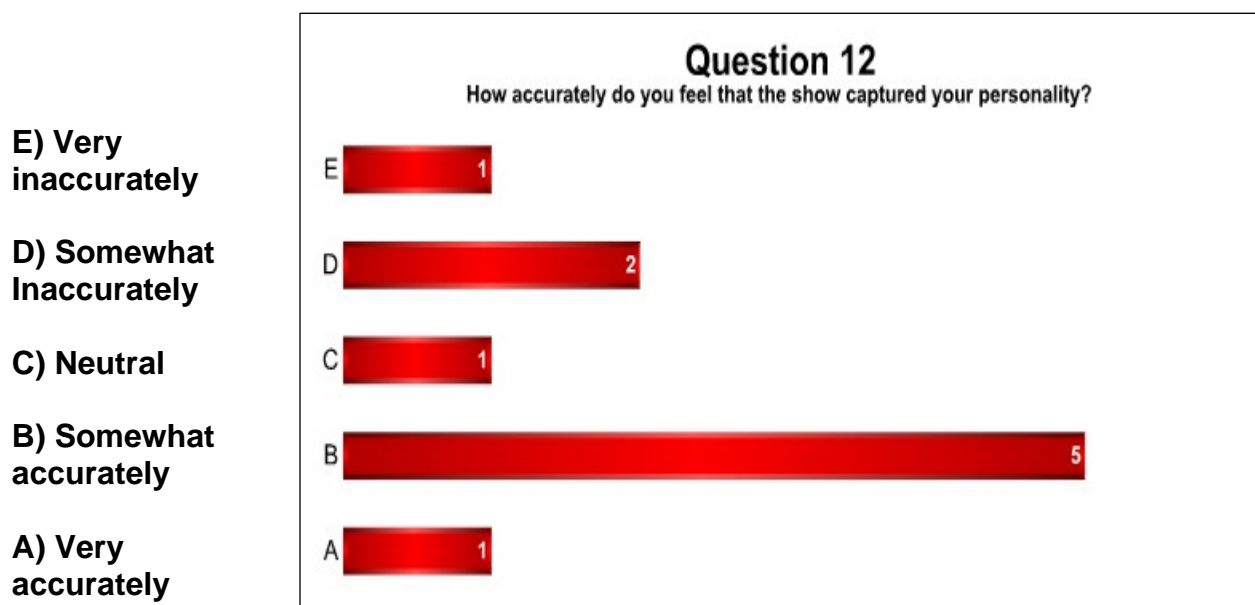


Figure 18 shows how the participants felt about how much editing changed the appearance of their experiences, $\underline{M} (10) = 2.00; \underline{SD} = .82$. The majority of participants, 7, chose “somewhat yes” as their answer, while 2 chose “very much” and only 1 chose “somewhat no.”

Figure 18. Question 14 results (participants).

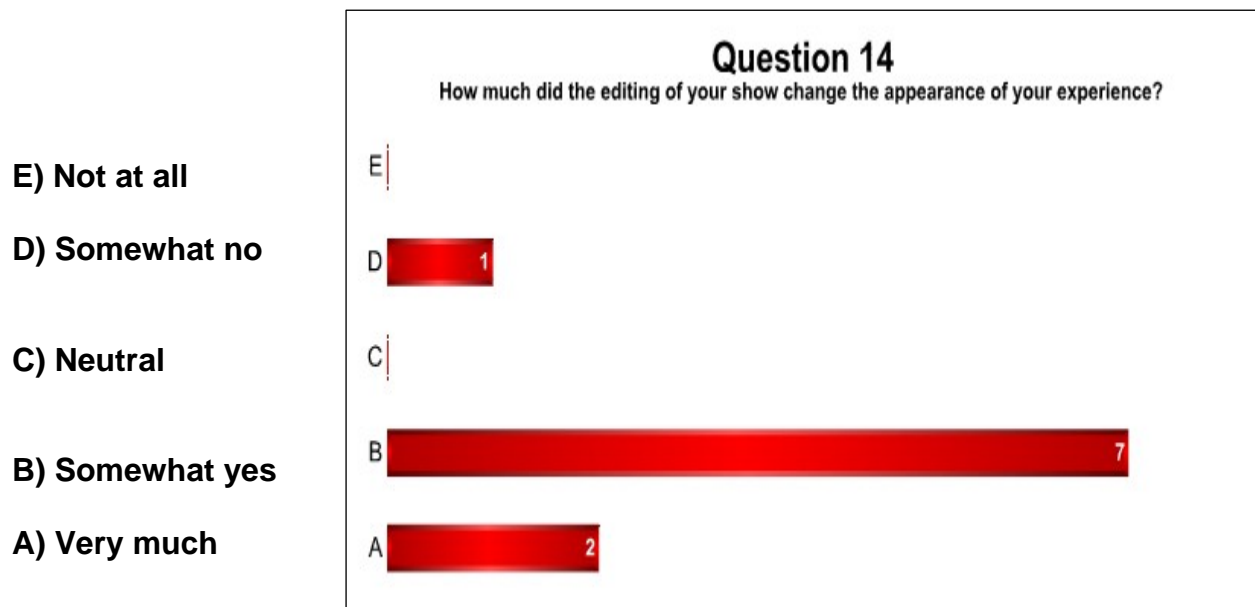
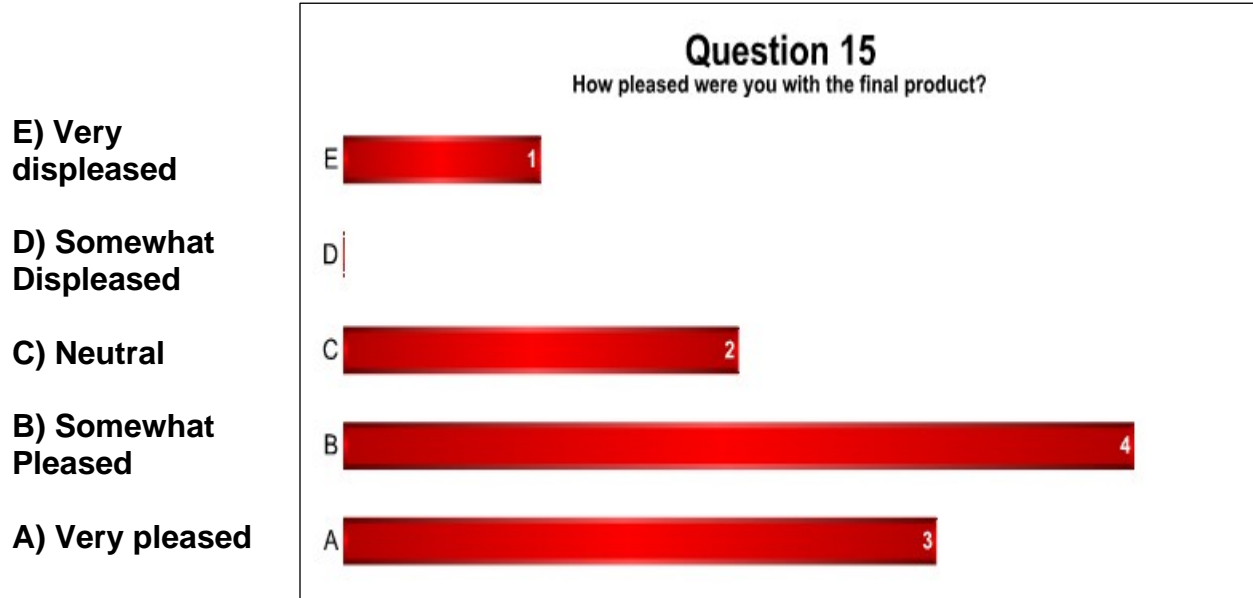


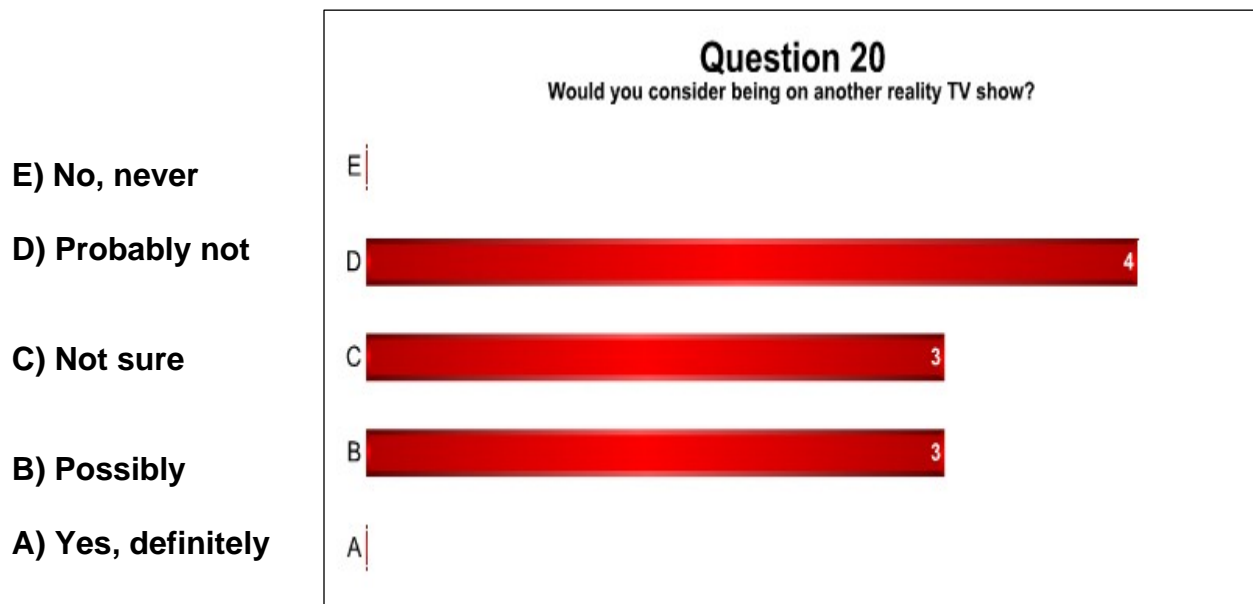
Figure 19 represents the answers to Question 15, how pleased were you with the final product, $\underline{M} (10) = 2.20; \underline{SD} = 1.23$. Four participants chose “somewhat pleased.”

Figure 19. Question 15 results (participants).



Of the 10 participants, $\bar{M}(10) = 3.10$; $SD = .88$, four answered that they would probably not like to participate in another reality TV show (Figure 20). None said that they would like to definitely.

Figure 20. Question 20 results (participants).



Open-ended questions

In response to Question 16, please describe how you were or were not pleased with the final product, one participant wrote that editing was used to change what she said on camera. Her answers were used to answer different questions, and editing was used to give justification for why she was eliminated. Nine out of the ten participants wrote that editing changed what really happened, whether it was something minor such as making a contestant look like she was making a face at someone else when she was really responding to a bug, to the producers making a boat sink by pulling a plug and giving the impression that an explosion caused it. Four of the participants wrote that statements they made during filming were taken out of context in the final product.

Answers to Question 17, how was your experience real or not real, ranged from “it was not real” to “it was very real.” One participant wrote, “everything I did was 100% real; however, editing made it a bit unreal.” Someone who was on *The Apprentice* wrote that his experience was very real because the producers gave little to no direction...“it was truly unscripted.” A participant on *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* thought that his experience was very real, but he also mentioned that retakes were shot to make sure that the right things were said on camera. Another participant felt that her experience was both real and not real. Her genuine emotions were caught on screen, but some events were manipulated. Editing conversations was also used to make a contestant look like he was mean to his girlfriend on *Big Brother*. He wrote that he was made to fill the villain role in his season. A contestant on *Beauty and the Geek* said that his experience was very real, but that it was not like real life because they were put into a situation unlike anything they were used to, and the producers would give them

direction. The participant from *Project Runway* answered his entire reality has been affected.

In response to Question 18, did your definition of reality TV change after your experience, participants wrote:

- a. now I understand how stressful it can be, they deconstruct you by the long hours and little food and then film what happens.
 - b. I found out that you can do a show without a script and someone will find a story in it.
 - c. I can tell who is going to be kicked off now if I watch reality shows.
 - d. At the end of the day I now know it's about making a TV show and about getting ratings. It's not as much about documenting how people live in reality or under certain circumstances.
 - e. I didn't watch reality TV before. It didn't seem real, legitimate. Now I know what actually happens is real, but what the editors cut and paste onto the TV can make things seem a lot different.
-

Two of the participants answered that their definition did not change.

Question 19 asked, do you think that your experience had any lasting affect on you or your life? "It will always be a sore spot for me because I saw who was not given a fair chance and who sailed through because they were making good TV." Another participant wrote that her life changed because it greatly affected her career, and she met her husband through one of the shows. One of the participants from *The Apprentice* said that his experience opened up a number of new business opportunities. The other

participant from the same show said that it had no lasting effect on his life. *Beauty and the Geek* helped one participant socially. He feels like he can now handle social situations better because of his experience. The longest answer given by someone who was on *MTV Road Rules* and subsequent challenges said the following:

It definitely changed my life. Not necessarily for the good, but not the bad either.

I am still in the middle of it all. It skews your perception of reality for sure. You're basically getting paid for bad behavior. In normal life, you can't just scream at someone and call them names without consequences. In reality TV, if you do that you're rewarded. Then sometimes you just want your own life back instead of sharing it with the world. When people assume they know you...it's just strange.

But after all these shows stop? No clue what I am going to do. It was supposed to be an experience, not a lifestyle. But you get caught up in it all...then you think about how for the past 5 years, your life has been documented for millions to judge.

When asked why they watch reality TV, participants who watch reality shows gave a variety of answers including because it is the only thing on, because I can relate, it is entertaining, and because they do a good job of giving people a hope that the average person can be on TV.

Question 24 dealt with whether some reality shows are more real than others. Eight of the ten respondents think that there is a difference. Five mentioned makeover shows as the most real. One said that competitive type shows try to set people up to fail in order to create "good TV." Another thinks that some shows are scripted and gave the example of *The Simple Life*. She went on further to say that the shows she appeared on

were not scripted at all. One participant wrote that they are real to a certain extent, and editing takes it to another level. He also said the participants are the ones providing the material for the producers to work with. Only one respondent gave a definite “no” response. He wrote:

No. But I do think that certain shows are able to fully capture reality than other shows. For example, talk shows are able to show almost all of the contestants' interactions, whereas challenge shows and makeover shows necessarily have to omit certain things and then edit the footage, which does influence the perspective of the viewing audience. I have found that most people who watch reality TV believe that the only thing that happened is what is presented on the screen. In other words, if they don't see it, they don't believe anything else happened, which can lead to some poor conclusions.

For the participants, a significant correlation was found between how close to reality do you think reality TV is and how close to real life was your experience. Those who think that reality TV is more real felt that their experiences were closer to real life, $r(82) = .660$, $p = .038$. A negative correlation was found between how close the participants think that reality TV is to reality and how much editing changed the appearance of the shows, $r(82) = -.690$, $p = .027$. Those who feel that reality TV is not very real responded that the editing of their shows changed the appearance of their experiences greatly. A correlation was found between how accurately the participant felt that his/her personality was captured and how pleased the participants were with the final product, $r(82) = .693$, $p = .026$. The more accurate the depiction, the more pleased the participant was.

A negative but not significant relationship was found between how close to real life was your experience and how much the editing changed the appearance of the participants' experiences, $r(82) = -.354$, $p = .316$. No significant relationship was found between how close to real life was your experience and how accurately do you feel the show captured your personality. There was not a significant correlation between how much editing changed the appearance of the experience and how pleased the participants were with the final product, $r(82) = .332$, $p = .348$. A correlation was found between how close to real life the experience was for the participant and how pleased he/she was with the final product, but it was not statistically significant, $r(82) = .626$, $p = .053$.

The t-tests performed on viewers' question 11 and participants' questions 10 and 11 yielded no significant differences. The result for viewers' question 11 and participants' question 10 was $t = .802$; $p = .443$, and for viewers' question 11 and participants' question 11, $t = .349$; $p = .349$.

In-depth Interviews

The three in-depth interviews with Irene McGee, Jennifer Lane, and Chris Russo were conducted over the phone in February and March of 2007. Summaries of those interviews can be found in Appendix C. Note: the interview with Irene McGee was cut short to be finished at another time. I did not hear back from Irene and later found out that her apartment had burned down so her interview stands as unfinished.

Summary

The viewer survey was completed by eighty-two reality show viewers, and ten participants completed the second survey. The open-ended questions yielded a great deal of interesting responses in both surveys. Some correlations were found between the Likert scale questions within the surveys, but none were found between the surveys. Both viewers and participants reported they believe that reality television is somewhat close to reality. Participants were influenced by their own experiences. Those who felt their experiences were more real also thought reality TV is fairly close to reality. All of the participants pointed to editing as a major factor in how the reality presented in the final products was somewhat constructed. Some said that editing changed things a lot, while others said that it changed some instances of the show. Most viewers and participants think that some reality shows are more real than others, but there were differences in which shows they think are more or less real. A basic analysis on content worked well for this study because answers were left intact allowing the reader to experience the original language and narration of the respondents.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Findings

“Because I like seeing how real people deal with real situations. When I watch scripted TV, the reason for everything is because the writers wrote it that way.”

- Reality TV viewer

“I think long-term investment shows are usually more “real.” You can only keep your “game face” on for so long, I would imagine, before your guard slipped down and your true nature is revealed before the camera.” –Reality TV viewer

“It was the most difficult time of my life, and has taken a while to get back to “reality” from “reality TV.” – Reality TV participant

The variety of responses collected through the surveys points to the fact there is no universal opinion regarding the reality of reality TV. Definitions of reality TV varied, but certain words and phrases appeared repeatedly such as “real people,” “non actors,” and “unscripted.” Viewers reported watching over 90 reality shows. They watch reality TV precisely because real people are on them. Viewers realize there is editing but not to the extent indicated by participants in their surveys. Respondents were asked open-ended questions which allowed them to tell their stories. Presenting these answers in full-text creates more of a narrative impact.

Results

Surveys

The surveys yielded interesting results, some expected and others not. The definitions of reality TV given by viewers were varied. One respondent said it is television where you don't know what the outcome will be. Another respondent wrote it is when regular people are taken and put on TV in contrived situations. The use of editing was not really mentioned in the viewers' surveys, but three participants used the word "edited" in their definitions of reality TV. This is indicative of the difference between viewers and participants. They have similar views of reality TV, but the participants have been behind the scenes. They know how their words and actions were taken out of context through editing. The biggest complaint voiced by participants was the use of editing to create a new reality that fit the producer's storyline. Several participants said they eventually realized that making good TV was the goal of his/her show.

When asked why they watch reality TV, viewers gave answers such as "the unpredictability," "I like to watch regular people making fools of themselves," and "drama." An overwhelming number of respondents said they watch reality TV because they like watching real people or non-actors. That so many people used the word "unscripted" points to the extensive use of the word in advertisements for many reality shows. Producers are trying to sell the notion that these are real people who are not using scripts to perform.

Many of the viewers' answers seemed to depend on what shows they watch. Some respondents listed many different types of reality shows while others said just HGTV shows or just *American Idol*. When asked how close reality TV is to reality,

“somewhat close” was the most selected answer. The majority of viewers chose “not much” or “somewhat” when asked how the reality factor influences their decision to watch reality TV. Those two answers are very similar and taken together imply that the perceived reality of the shows matters to viewers.

People who think reality TV is close to reality care more about the reality factor. This makes sense. Also, people interested in being on reality television shows think reality TV is more real. Those who do not believe in the reality of the shows are less interested in being on them. People enjoy the drama found on reality TV, and participants verified the idea that producers create conflict to add to the drama. Several viewers indicated they enjoy seeing people like themselves on TV so they can learn from the participants’ mistakes or feel better about themselves. Seeing how people react in situations is another reason why people watch reality TV; they want to see true reactions. The survey responses of participants indicate that, while the reactions are true, they are not always used in context.

Half of the viewers said they enjoy discussing shows with family or friends and this influences their decision to watch reality TV. Reality television has a substantial impact on society, and this is just one example. People enjoy the opportunity to express their own judgments about the shows and the participants. Twenty-eight viewers said they have voted for a reality TV contestant. This is a significant number of people to be involved in that way. Traditional television does not elicit viewer participation. With reality TV, viewers are encouraged to participate in the outcome. Some critics believe viewer participation is not really accounted for in how shows turn out, but the viewers must believe they are making an impact to go to the trouble of calling or text messaging

their votes. Most of the viewers surveyed here were found through reality TV discussion boards. The sample may be biased, but these are true reality television enthusiasts.

While ten participants are not many to survey, the answers they provided give great insight into what reality TV participants go through. My own experience was validated by the participants' accounts of similar directing and editing. Although participants reported that reality TV is either somewhat close or neutral in relation to reality, more of them felt that their own experiences were somewhat real. Three chose "somewhat not real" for how close to life their experiences were, a significant number of responses for that question. Only one participant felt his/her personality was accurately captured on the show, while half of the participants described the correlation between the two as only somewhat. It is clear from this that most of the participants thought they were not truly captured on film. Three of the participants said they were very pleased with the final product. Two of these participants were winners of major shows, and the third was on a makeover show. Four answered somewhat pleased. Only one was very displeased with her show; she felt she was not given a fair chance, and that the experience had a negative impact on her life.

A variety of shows were represented by the surveyed participants allowing for interesting comparisons to be made. Two of the participants were on *The Apprentice*: one of them was hired by Donald Trump, the other was fired after a few episodes. The winning participant gave much more positive answers than the other participant. The same is true of the two participants from *America's Next Top Model*. All of the shows were series long except for *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*. The experience of the participant from that one episode show was very different from the other respondents.

He reported less repetition and direction from the producers and minimal editing. With the exception of *Queer Eye*, all of the shows represented are competition shows.

Several of the participants made the point that producers are trying to make good TV. The participant from *Average Joe* was the woman cast on the show. Even though she was not the one competing, she still felt it was her responsibility to make good television. She always had that thought in the back of her mind. Because the show focused on her decisions, it was important that she be a likeable character viewers would want to see week after week. She said her emotions were real, but editing changed a lot of outcomes. In fact, a post-script to the last episode claimed that she and the suitor she chose broke up after the show when in fact they were (and still are) together.

Giving the participants the opportunity to respond to open-ended questions yielded the most telling results.

In-depth interviews

Summaries of the three in-depth phone interviews can be found in Appendix C.

Implications

There is no one definition of Reality TV, but responses to the surveys in this study indicate that a popular definition might be “unscripted television shows that feature real people.” Some viewers suspect the shows are not particularly real while others believe in their integrity. Some recognize the fact that all television shows are edited and viewers do not see the whole picture. From one participant’s response, we know that not all people think this way. He said that people he met after the show acted like they knew him personally, although the way he was portrayed was not completely

accurate. Some people forget about what other things happened that ended up on the editing room floor. The majority of viewers think there is some reality to reality TV, and the participants confirmed this belief. The things that they did on camera were real, but how that footage is used in the final product can alter reality.

Being on reality TV changes people's lives. Few viewers mentioned this possibility. The reality show participants were affected by their television experiences in different ways. One person said she found Christianity through the experience while another became somewhat famous after being on multiple reality shows. Several participants went back to their regular lives after the experience. While the changes may not have been earth shattering, each person said the show had affected his/her life. Viewers cannot realize the impact being on TV has on the participants. Once the show ends, the viewers forget the participants, or if they do encounter them again, they judge them based on what they saw on TV. Two participants said that strangers who recognized them perceive them as they were portrayed on their shows. I was recognized at work several times after *Faking It*, probably because people remembered the stereotype of a librarian that was played up at the beginning.

Limitations

Sampling

There are several factors that may have limited the outcome of the study. Collecting anonymous data through the Internet is tricky. The Website used to create the surveys does not allow participants to take the survey more than once based on cookies collected by their computers. This is not a foolproof method of making sure one individual does not submit multiple surveys. Targeting people who visit online

discussions of reality TV was one way of finding people interested in the topic and willing to participate in a study. However, this means that the answers to the survey question on whether respondent participates in online discussion groups were skewed. Thirty-two of the viewers indicated knowing someone who has been on reality TV. Their relationship to the participant was not asked for so it is not possible to know how much knowledge they may have gained from knowing someone who has been on a show.

As many reality TV participants as possible were contacted to take Survey 2, but this was based on the amount of information available on the Internet about people who were on these types of shows. Generally, there is more public information on people who have been on series rather than on single episodes. The Websites for single episode productions do not stay up forever, and many of them do not include contact information for participants.

Survey

There was a problem with the age question for viewers. Instead of categories that spanned ten years, they should have been 18-29, 30-39, etc. Neutral is not a good choice to provide people, and it should not have been used because it is a non answer. There are many reasons why someone may choose neutral, and the researcher cannot know why. In addition, some of the answer choices for the survey questions were too similar. For instance, somewhat close and somewhat not close could be difficult to choose between.

Recommendations

There is a great deal more that could be done with this study. Better survey questions may yield different and clearer responses. If more reality TV show participants could be surveyed, differences across types of shows might be found. Competition shows and makeover shows probably have very different filming schedules and editing processes. Another possibility would be to interview people before and after they are filmed for a reality show to see if and how their perceptions change as a result of the show. It is difficult to think back to before being on a show and remember your thoughts about reality TV.

Conclusion

I know from my own experience of being filmed for an episode of *Faking It* that the story presented was not completely true. Some of the fabrications originated with me while others came from the producer. The premise of my show, a super shy librarian becoming a Coyote Ugly® bartender, is fundamentally faulty. If I was really as shy as they made me appear on camera, I would not have been able to complete the transformation. Little untruths were necessary to the overall success of the show.

Faking It was very different from the series-long reality shows with which most people are familiar. It had elements of both a makeover show and a competition, but there was no reward at the end whether or not I faked-out the judges. People asked why I wanted to be on a show where I did not have an opportunity to win something. I personally felt winning a prize was not as important as the television experience itself. Chris Russo said he applied for *The Apprentice* because he, like all reality TV participants, wanted to be famous. I too grew up wanting to be famous.

People have become bored with the dramas and comedies of the past. They are all too similar. Reality TV filled that void by giving audiences something completely new. Now many other types of shows use elements of reality television. *Lost* is a version of *Survivor* with actors; many crime shows use handheld cameras like the ones used on *COPS*. People have decided they like to watch real people on television, and producers choose the most entertaining outrageous people they can for reality shows. For large productions, the auditions are rigorous. A lot is invested in these non actors so they have to be able to make good TV. Conversely, smaller productions like *Faking It* depend on the honesty of the participants and the good judgment of the casting coordinators. The producer of my episode told me about another faker she had worked with who was not reliable. She was not able to get as much footage with him, and his episode was much less varied than my own. Another *Faking It* episode was cancelled after one week of filming because the producer realized that there was no way that the faker was going to pull off the feat. She was supposed to learn to be a ballroom dancer but had no dance experience or skills. I could see my episode going the same way if someone had been chosen who really could not dance or develop the coordination for bartending and flaring. I had the previous experience to pull it off. Of course, the footage used in my episode played up my difficulties, yelling and speaking into the microphone. The footage where I did really well at something was probably cut because it did not fit the story arc.

The reality constructed in reality TV is done through three perspectives. The producers create a storyline; they know what needs to happen during filming to achieve the final product. The participants want to look good, and they want to please the

producer. The viewers want to be entertained, watch real people, and gather information from what they see. With these goals in mind, three different realities are created. The producers' creation of reality is most obvious. A script may not be used, but producers plan the shots they need to make the story work. A participant's reality is changed through the filming process. Having cameras follow you is unnatural and foreign to most people's experience. Inserting people into new situations and putting a camera in the room changes how people act. The viewers create their own reality by watching the shows and forming opinions based on what they see. Most viewers choose to accept the disbelief created by editing; they do not think beyond what is being presented to them.

Reality TV has become an established genre. As more people watch the shows and participate in them, the secrets of editing and created reality are revealed. Viewers do not seem to care that these shows are not completely "real" as long as they continue to feature real people. This knowledge deconstruction and reconstruction has no known lasting effects on society. If in the future, however, these moving documents are viewed as accurate representations of people and events, they would likely mislead people. Someone watching my show may think all librarians in 2004 were like the character I played at the beginning.

Reality TV should be defined as television that features real people. Dropping the term "unscripted" would add greatly to the reality of reality television. There are still viewers who believe everything they see is real. The problem with this is the fact that people use television as a source of information. If viewers accept unequivocally what they see, that could negatively affect their worldviews. *Wife Swap* is an example of a

show that uses extremes to entertain. Stereotypes are presented as reality. An environmentally conscious family may be chosen along with a fundamentalist Christian family. The family concerned with the environment will live in a tree house, grow its own food and not own a car. This is not how most environmentally conscious people live, but the information that comes across to the viewer is that these people are representative of the entire group to which they belong. This can be especially dangerous if a viewer's only exposure to a particular group of people is through the reality show.

Reality TV seems to thrive on stereotypes. Sometimes the portrayals are positive and sometimes they are not. In this way, knowledge about people is being constructed through reality TV. Is it purely entertainment or is there some lasting effect? The answer depends on how much viewers buy into the reality presented through these shows. From this study, most reality TV viewers appear to have some idea that the shows are not completely based in reality. If entertainment were the only purpose served by these shows then there would be no question, but as so many people are interested in watching real people on television, the effect on society is important and worth further investigation.

O'Connor's (1996) representation context web is a powerful tool for describing the multiple "realities" constructed through reality TV production. The episode presented to viewers is a highly constructed reality that poses as a condensed version of reality. Viewers are not aware of the rules of construction so they cannot determine for themselves which parts of this second-hand knowledge is inauthentic. While documentary film is not free from political influence, its purpose is generally educational. The purpose of reality TV is entertainment.

Students are taught how to distinguish between primary and secondary sources of print information and to identify credible online sources. Little is done to educate these students in critiquing the authenticity of visual media. If highly constructed television is going to be presented as “reality,” then we must do more to help viewers understand the difference between the reality of the participants and the reality of the production. The construction of knowledge in this format can lead people to faulty assumptions that may affect their image of the world or lead to actions based on false information.

A real-world application of this theory is presented in Mayer’s (2007) critique of the drama *24*. He wrote that the show is very popular among American troops in Iraq. In interviews, these soldiers admitted to watching the show and then employing the torture techniques they learned from *24*’s main character. This is a fictional drama, yet the negative effect it has had on individuals is tangible and significant. The soldiers have adopted certain illegal methods of torture due to a compelling fictional reality constructed by the producers of *24*.

If we are to use the word “reality” as it is defined, the state of things as they actually exist, then the construction of knowledge seen in television today becomes a tricky matter when the term “reality” is applied to a specific genre. In Pauwel’s *Visual Cultures of Science*, he writes that visual representations are a necessary part of scientific discourse.

The often-heard claim that (visual) representations should be ‘truthful’ or ‘according to nature’ is flawed for several reasons. Not only is the notion of reality itself highly constructed, but also a degree zero is lacking in visual perception, that is, there is no state where things are perceived in an uncolored and unbiased form. Furthermore, any technique or medium, however sophisticated and advanced, at best can provide some highly mediated *renderings* of that presumed reality. (Pauwels, 2006, p. vi-viii)

Visual representations do not duplicate reality but reveal it. Reality television is a representation of something that took place, but the reality constructed for viewers is not necessarily the same reality experienced by the participants. Television can have a profound effect on people, and they must be educated so that they are not fooled by the “reality” of reality TV.

APPENDIX A
FAKING IT BIBLE EXCERPT

FORMAT

The format of *Faking It* is to take someone from one walk of life and give them four weeks of intensive training in a specialized field.

YOU

Your transformation should be in part, self explanatory.

Try to ignore the camera and production team as much as possible during taping.

Although it may feel strange at first to be under the scrutiny of a camera. It is your job to be focused on the task at hand, your training.

YOUR ROLE

You may find that you excel at some of the activities/skills and have difficulties at others.

How you perform is up to you. You will ultimately be the one responsible for practicing/studying during off camera hours.

APPENDIX B

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Television Viewers Survey

Informed Consent Notice

My name is Haley K. Holmes and I am a graduate student in the School of Library and Information Science Department at the University of North Texas. I am conducting an online study about reality TV and its current popularity.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked complete a questionnaire about reality TV. It will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. There are no immediate benefits for your participation, except that you will be helping me complete an important part of my education. Your responses may help us learn more about why reality TV is such a popular genre today.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to skip any question you choose not to answer. There are no foreseeable risks involved in this study; however, if you decide to withdraw your participation you may do so at any time by simply leaving the Website.

Your name will not be requested in this study so your responses will be anonymous. All research records will be kept confidential by the Principal Investigator. No individual responses will be disclosed to anyone because all data will be reported on a group basis. If you have any questions about the study, please contact Haley Holmes at 940-395-0685 or my faculty sponsor, Brian O'Connor, School of Library and Information Science at 940-565-2445.

This research project has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board. Please contact the UNT IRB at 940-565-3940 with any questions regarding your rights as a research subject.

If you agree to participate, you may print this document for your records.

By clicking below, you are confirming that you are at least 18 years old and you are giving your informed consent to participate in this study.

haleydissertation@hotmail.com

Reality television viewers

1) I am at least 18 years old and give my informed consent to participate in this study.

Yes

No

2) Age:

18-30

30-40

40-50

50-60

60-70

Over 70

3) Gender:

Male

Female

4) What reality TV shows do you watch regularly?

5) What television shows other than reality TV do you watch regularly?

6) How do you define reality TV?

7) Why do you watch reality TV?

8) Does the opportunity to discuss reality television shows with your friends or family influence your decision to watch the shows?

9) Do you participate in reality shows by voting for or against participants? Why or why not?

10) Do you participate in activities related to reality TV beyond just watching the shows and voting, such as online discussions? Please explain.

11) How close to reality do you think reality TV is?

Very close

Somewhat close

Neutral

Somewhat not close

Not close at all

12) How much does the reality factor influence your decision to watch reality TV?

Very much

Somewhat

Neutral

Not much

Not at all

13) There are many different types of reality television shows (e.g. talk shows, challenge shows, makeover shows, game shows). Do you think that some of these are more “real” than others? Why or why not?

14) Would you like to be a participant on a reality TV show?

Yes, definitely

Possibly

Not sure

Probably not

No, never

15) Do you personally know anyone who has been on a reality television show?

Yes

No

16) Other comments:

Reality Television Participants Survey

Informed Consent Notice

My name is Haley K. Holmes and I am a graduate student in the School of Library and Information Science Department at the University of North Texas. I am conducting an online study about reality TV and its current popularity.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked complete a questionnaire about reality TV. It will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. There are no immediate benefits for your participation, except that you will be helping me complete an important part of my education. Your responses may help us learn more about why reality TV is such a popular genre today.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to skip any question you choose not to answer. There are no foreseeable risks involved in this study; however, if you decide to withdraw your participation you may do so at any time by simply leaving the Website.

Your name will not be requested in this study so your responses will be anonymous. All research records will be kept confidential by the Principal Investigator. No individual responses will be disclosed to anyone because all data will be reported on a group basis. If you have any questions about the study, please contact Haley Holmes at 940-395-0685 or my faculty sponsor, Brian O'Connor, School of Library and Information Science at 940-565-2445.

This research project has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board. Please contact the UNT IRB at 940-565-3940 with any questions regarding your rights as a research subject.

If you agree to participate, you may print this document for your records.

By clicking below, you are confirming that you are at least 18 years old and you are giving your informed consent to participate in this study.

haleydissertation@hotmail.com

Reality Television Participants Survey

1) I am at least 18 years old and give my informed consent to participate in this study.

Yes

No

2) Name:

3) Contact info (email is fine):

4) Age:

5) Gender:

Male

Female

6) Show title/episode:

7) Date/s your episode aired:

8) Briefly, what was the show about?

9) How do you define reality TV?

10) How close to reality to you think reality TV is?

Very close

Somewhat close

Neutral

Somewhat not close

Not close at all

11) How close to real life was your experience?

Very real

Somewhat real

Neutral

Somewhat not real

Not real at all

12) How accurately do you feel that the show captured your personality?

Very accurately

Somewhat accurately

Neutral

Somewhat inaccurately

Very inaccurately

13) Was the filming what you expected? Why or why not?

14) How much did the editing of your show change the appearance of your experience?

Very much

Somewhat yes

Neutral

Somewhat no

Not at all

15) How pleased were you with the final product?

Very pleased

Somewhat pleased

Neutral

Somewhat displeased

Very displeased

16) Please describe how you were or were not pleased with the final product.

17) How was your experience real or not real? Please provide an example or two.

18) Did your definition of reality TV change after your experience? How?

19) Do you think that your experience had any lasting affect on you or your life? Why or why not?

20) Would you consider being on another reality TV show?

Yes, definitely

Possibly

Not sure

Probably not

No, never

21) What reality TV shows do you watch regularly?

22) Why do you watch reality TV?

23) What other television shows do you watch regularly?

24) There are many different types of reality television shows (e.g. talk shows, challenge shows, makeover shows, game shows). Do you think that some of these are more “real” than others? Why or why not?

25) Other comments.

APPENDIX C

SUMMARY OF IN-DEPTH PHONE INTERVIEWS

Irene McGee

In 1998, Irene McGee was on *The Real World* in Seattle. She is famous for being the first person to walk off the set of a reality TV show. Tryouts for the show were held at her University so she went and applied. Irene said she actually left the tryouts because she was not really that interested. Even so, she was chosen for the show. She said she was chosen because she is smart, funny and because they want people they can manipulate. Irene believes all of the people who work behind the scenes of reality TV are evil, and she does not understand how they justify their actions. She is ethically opposed to how *The Real World* is created. She said that it was manipulated and calculated. People were set up against one another; it was disgusting. Irene left the show because of her feelings. *The Real World* was one of the first reality shows and people did not understand why she left. She felt alone because no one else had had that experience before so no one could understand her feelings or actions.

Jennifer Lane

I spoke with Jennifer Lane about her experiences as a camera operator and co-executive producer on reality TV shows. She has worked behind the scenes on reality shows for ten years. Before reality television, she made documentaries for PBS.

Jennifer's first reality TV show job was camera operator on the Disney Channel's *Bug Juice*. She has since worked on *Temptation Island*, *The Osbournes*, and *Joe Millionaire*. Currently, Jennifer is the co-executive producer of the MTV show, *Maui Fever*.

My first question for Jennifer was "how do you define reality TV?" The best definition she has heard came from an executive producer of the show *Fear Factor*: reality TV is when ordinary people are taken out of their lives and placed in an extraordinary place. People must be removed from their usual circumstances for it to be considered reality TV. Jennifer said the popular definition seems to be when real people are put on television. She considers *The Real World* and *Survivor* to be reality TV shows, but *American Idol* is just a game show. *Extreme Home Makeover* is a reality show because the experience of the participants is completely unique to the show. Jennifer considers *The Osbournes* a documentary because the cameras simply captured a family in their own home going about their lives.

When I asked Jennifer how close to reality she thinks reality TV is she responded, 70%. Jennifer acknowledged that producers have to create a story. There has to be a heroine, a villain, and a love interest. Anytime you put a camera in front of someone it changes reality. Even when making documentaries, people are told what to do, where to stand, etc. Jennifer said the truth is that they would not have enough material to edit if they did not give the participants direction. People might be edited out

of context, but the producers are just trying to create a story. Like any story, those on reality television have to have acts to keep the audience interested.

I asked Jennifer if she thinks participants know what they are getting into when they agree to be on a reality show. She said they are stupid if they say they did not know. She thinks people know that editing changes what really happened. People may be made into a certain type of character, such as the villain, but in order for editing to do that, the person had to act a certain way. All negative instances can be put together to make someone look worse than they may have actually been but that person really did all of those negative things for them to be caught on camera. In exit interviews, most participants say they knew what they were getting into and they are happy they were on the shows.

Jennifer said reality TV has not changed at all since she started working in it. I asked if the filming of reality TV shows differs from other types of TV shows and, if so, how? She said it is definitely different. When using the narrative camera, you can put it where you want. In reality television, the camera follows the subject. She said having a bigger budget makes a difference. Half of a show is done with one camera while certain scenes such as eliminations will use as many as nine cameras. She said good reality TV camerapersons are able to get coverage with just one camera. On *The Apprentice*, the boardroom is set up like a scene on an actual set. For the *Amazing Race*, one camera is used to follow each team, but zone coverage is used to film the final scenes of each leg of the race with local crews.

Jennifer reported watching several reality shows including *America's Next Top Model*, *The Apprentice*, *Laguna Beach*, and *The Simple Life*. She said she once ran into

Lisa, a contestant from *America's Next Top Model*. Lisa was made to look like an alcoholic on the show. Jennifer asked her about her experience on the show. Lisa said they took every shot of her drinking alcohol and put them together to make it appear she drank a lot more than she did. She also said that the funny things she did trying to make the other girls laugh were changed in editing to make her look crazy. Even so, she did not regret the experience.

Jennifer posed the question, does reality TV hurt our culture? She does not think so. She believes there are “sterling” reality shows, shows that make you think. There are bad reality shows just like there are bad dramas and comedies. Jennifer has been in the industry for ten years and says that reality TV is some of the best and some of the worst programming on television. Jennifer said reality television marks a renaissance of culture. People want to see other people on TV without scripts. Jennifer says this is why reality TV is so popular and why the genre is not going away. During the interview she asked about my experience, and I told her a little bit about it. My last question was whether she would consider being on a reality show herself. Her answer, “I don’t know if I have the courage.”

Chris Russo

Chris Russo was a contestant on season two of *The Apprentice* in 2004. He also appeared on *Battle of the Network Reality Stars*. I asked Chris why he applied for the show. He said, “to be famous. If anyone tells you anything other than that, they’re lying.” Chris did not go to college. In fact, in high school he was voted most likely to end up in jail. He has since become a very successful businessman. He wanted to prove on *The Apprentice* that he is able to succeed despite his lack of a college education.

Chris described the application process as a nightmare. His wife encouraged him to try out, saying this was his shot at something big. He tried out for season one, but he was told they did not receive his audition tape. To make sure the same thing did not happen twice, Chris made ten copies of his video and application and mailed them all in before the deadline by different means. They ended up receiving nine of them. Chris was told later that his was the first tape watched and the first put into the yes pile. There was a background check, and he went through several interviews in New York. He had 15 minutes to present himself. He prepared a presentation and a ten-year business plan. Chris said he had the casting people in stitches and was there for one and a half hours. He was himself in the interview, cursing and loud. Chris knew he had made it to the next round but was ecstatic nonetheless when he got the news. He knew he had a chance to win the show.

In California, Chris was kept in a hotel for a week before being interviewed by Mark Burnett, the executive producer of *The Apprentice*, and 14 other NBC executives. Chris recalled that all of the potential participants were on edge by this time. He thinks the idea behind the technique of keeping them locked up like that was to put them under

pressure to see how they would react once it was time for the interview. He said they started the interview by making fun of his New York accent. Chris tried to make them laugh, but no matter what he said, they kept straight faces. Chris told them he did not care anymore what they thought; he just wanted to get out of the hotel. Again he tried to sell himself as qualified but crazy enough to be entertaining on TV. He was asked if he would have a problem staying on the set for eight weeks even if he was fired first because his home is blocks from where the show would be shot. Chris' wife was pregnant at the time, so the producers knew it would be tempting for him to go home. He told the executives it would not be a problem. Chris said being chosen for the show was the best part of the experience.

I asked Chris how close to reality does he think *The Apprentice* is. He answered 80%. It was a lot of work. They were filmed for eight weeks, from 6am to 2am some days. He said there were a lot of rules you would never face in the business world. Everything had to be done on speakerphone. Any time filming was done in a business, crew members went ahead of the participants to get releases signed. Because people knew the participants and cameras were coming they probably acted differently than if they had not known. The participants did not have to repeat scenes; everything was captured on the first take. The famous boardroom is actually not a boardroom at all but a set. Chris said the participants would take the escalator down from their suite then an elevator up to the boardroom. It was not long before he realized the boardroom set was actually just on the other side of the wall from the suite. Chris thinks the editing of the show was done poorly. His family and friends told him after seeing the show that he did not seem like himself. They said he was too serious. Chris said he was actually very

funny during the filming, but he was made into someone serious through editing and that another participant was made into the funny one.

Chris has very strong opinions of *The Apprentice*. He thinks greed has ruined the show starting with his season. In season one, the participants' last names were used, but in his season they were not. This was due to the fact the season one participants gained celebrity from the show. Chris believes Donald Trump and Mark Burnett wanted to keep from sharing celebrity with the participants so they took away their last names to make them more anonymous. After his season aired, Chris tried to contact the producers of the show with his ideas, but they did not respond to him. He thinks the show focused too much on fighting among the participants.

After seeing the show, Chris could tell that the episodes were edited from the boardroom backwards. Each episode focused on the people who were potentially going to be fired in the boardroom at the end. Chris said he did not receive as much screen time as other participants because he was on winning teams most of the time. If you did well, you were not featured in the episodes. He said the boardroom scenes actually lasted one to five hours each.

Chris believes the participants who make good TV are the ones who make it further in the show. He said in the end, the winner looks good because all of the episodes have been edited that way. A major instance when producers helped change the outcome of the show was the episode in which Chris was fired. In the boardroom in the episode before, Chris told Donald Trump that the teams should be reorganized or his team would keep winning. Trump is shown telling Chris he will be the project manager for his team the next day. Chris said this did not happen. He was actually told

off camera the next day by Trump's secretary. The task for his team was to create a bridal shop. The opposing team's leader actually owns a bridal shop so Chris' team really had no chance. Chris learned later from a friend who works for another company featured on the show that the tasks were switched at the last minute. He thinks this was done to ensure that his team would lose and he would be fired in that episode.

Chris was a big fan of *The Apprentice* before he went on the show, but now he does not watch it. He said he knew he would look bad on the show because his personality did not come through. He now knows the show is all about ratings and the participants are open game. If it helps ratings, the producers will make the people on the show look like fools. Chris' major criticism of *The Apprentice* is that the final task of each season is too easy and nothing like the previous tasks. The participants are supposedly arranging a large event, but in actuality, the events have already been planned. The input of the participants is very minimal. Chris thinks the real purpose of the final episode is to sell brands.

APPENDIX D

Full text survey responses

Question 6
Viewer Survey
How do you define reality TV?

1. Unscripted, with real people not actors
2. Shows that feature real people instead of actors.
3. Any show that ostensibly portrays real people in a competition or real-life situation.
4. Unscripted (or supposedly unscripted) with people not playing characters.
5. A show, generally featuring NON-actors, filmed without a script.
6. unscripted television starring "regular" people
7. A show that is unscripted with real people in the roles of the show.
8. Real people, contrived situations.
9. Unscripted (officially) but manipulated by producers... People who are not (yet) professional actors cast into contests which are artificial situations created for drama, tension, competition and then producers observe and/or manipulate the interactions and film it to develop/create storylines for TV.
Addendum – I also think "Reality TV" does include talk shows, game shows, nanny shows, dating shows, talent shows, weight loss and makeover shows, home makeover shows, etc. but since I only have basic TV and rarely watch those –except for Letterman!- I was defining "Reality TV" much more narrowly.
10. Shows starring "real" people, not actors.
11. Not A lot of reality going on.
12. Reality TV uses "real" people as the main characters rather than actors.
13. Some reality TV is informational, instructional.
14. Unscripted with non "actors".
15. A game show with an winner and a prize. (Exceptions being The Real World shows, which are clearly Reality TV in spite of my definition.) I don't think shows like Cops qualify.
16. Unscripted with non-actors.
17. TV programs that are unscripted and looks at people's genuine reactions in contrived circumstances
18. non-celebrities in a contrived setting, with no script.
19. Unscripted programming with non-actors.
20. If the people on the show are actors, they are playing themselves. Less scripted than regular TV.
21. Non Actors on an Unscripted Television Program.
22. Unscripted television shows
23. A program that is not scripted, and the people appearing on the show are doing it more for fun than for a living.
24. Television that is not a sitcom, newshow, or "scripted"
25. non-celebrity show w/prize for top contender
26. They are almost like game shows, only you get to see all of the behind the scenes disagreements, etc. Basically DRAMA
27. a camera on a person who does not have a rehersed script
28. Fun, embarrassing, stupid
29. Watching people that are not acting.

30. Anything that puts real people in situations to watch how they react, not a scripted show.
31. No Script, no actors. People put in certain situations and see what naturally occurs.
32. Competition tv, or real people not actors playing the roles of not themselves.
33. Watching to see how average people react to non scripted events.
34. A show where contestants vie for money in a variety of ways. Opposite of any regular TV show.
35. TV that is generally competition based and with normal people, not actors
36. TV without actors; showcasing people in other professions not using paid actors. TV where the outcome cannot be predicted.
37. Any television show which is personality-driven, with a contrived situation in which the viewer is invited to be a voyeur.
38. Shows where there are not necessarily writers coming up with the exact plot and dialogue but rather the individuals participating come up with their own words and the plot changes with individual responses.
39. Not quite sure.
40. I actually had a little trouble: American Idol, to me, is not "reality TV," and ANTM is in a grey zone. I think there are basically two broad genres of reality TV, with subgenres: "competitive reality" shows, like Project Runway, Top Chef, etc., which are like game shows but with contestants in residence; and reality shows that go into a person's or family's home or other aspect of their life and purport to show (and usually change) at least some aspects of it.
41. TV that showcases non-actors
42. Real people not characters on show, not game shows or news programs.
No scripted storyline; no creative writing, plt or scene development
43. Television shows in which the participants are generally nonprofessionals, and generally in unscripted situations. Hell, even game shows are reality television.
44. Show based on real life not fiction
45. A show that uses as contestants or subjects people who are not paid actors.
46. Non-scripted shows featuring people who are not professional TV talent
47. MIND NUMBING
48. Competition
49. drama
50. Rigged social experimentation using non-actors televised for public amusement.
51. non-actors participating in a staged challenge, makeover or game show
52. Unplanned outcomes with non-professional actors. Something which is not scripted and features people acting as they normally would
53. "Real people" i.e. not paid actors in situations, real or contrived, often with an overtone of competition.
54. Not real
55. Taking regular people and putting them on TV in contrived situations. It saves the stations I of money since they don't have to pay much for the "talent".
56. Real people doing things as opposed to actors acting.
57. Cameras recording people, not actors, in everyday life or situations.
58. Programs which enlist participants for a loosely defined compenion agenda then, with a certain amount of "coaching", allow the contest to unfold.

59. Time consuming
60. Can hook you in so you have to watch it every week
61. Any show that doesn't have a script.
62. Any show with "normal" people in it as opposed to actors.
63. Non-scripted television
64. a show not based around a script
65. real people being filmed in a relatively unscripted format
66. Stories that deal in reality.
67. not scripted , somewhat "real"
68. Viewing other people's problems first hand
69. "Real people reacting to various situations without a script." Although I do know that it's not as "real" as they like us to think.
70. pseudo- documentary with the producers deciding what will bring the best return. In terms of return viewers/money.
71. I think some of it is good,there are shows out there that are ridiculous and should never be viewed or on tv in the early evenings.Some are terrible.the ones that are contests,like American Idol are sweet and they are helping people to get a career started,Survivor also can help someone win a million dollars.it is a competition,It is good
72. Something Like House of Cards,where you are just watching the way they live is a waste of tv time.Who cares about these people's personal lives.
- Television without scripts or acting. Reality takes place every second of every show
73. Real and entertaining
74. TV where you don't know what the outcome will be.
75. Interesting, but not fair..
76. too much judging on Looks and/or weight...
77. TV that features guys and gals off the street, typically competing for prizes or being filmed "living their lives" on camera.
78. No script, real people
79. Anything which can happen in real life
80. An unscripted show, usually a contest of some kind
81. utter trash; rather guilty pleasure
82. I program that presents itself as unscripted, which usually contains people who are unknown to the general public.
83. Relatively unscripted shows featuring non-actors or real people. Although an inordinate aspiring actors seem to end up on reality tv. Or a show featuring celebrities doing something other than acting such as competing against each other in ordinary tasks

Question 7

Viewer Survey

Why do you watch reality TV?

1. The unpredictability
2. It's engaging and addictive.
3. When it's done well, it can be compelling in a way that's quite different from scripted TV.
4. I only watch one show, Queer Eye, and that's because my best friend stars on it. Honestly, I sort of hate reality TV in general.

5. Different reasons. The Amazing Race is the best of all competitive reality – the adventure and race aspect are exciting, and there's not so much conniving or headgame-playing as in other competitive reality.
6. I watch the Nanny shows for education – dealing w/ real life child-rearing issues.
7. Rock Star and So You Think You Can Dance are pure entertainment – great performing and great dancing.
8. Because truth can be stranger than fiction. I like to speculate what else happened that wasn't caught on film. Unlike fiction shows, where the writers intentionally show something or not, and intentionally leave things to be ambiguous, in reality tv, there is always a background story, a scene missing. I like to speculate what happened in the hours that ended up on the editing room floor.
9. I find it to be entertaining, and it's a good time waster.
10. I like to watch regular people making fools of themselves.
11. Various reasons. I enjoy the aspect of being a fly on the wall for Big Brother. I enjoy the travel and adventure on Amazing Race. Survivor also has the element of the adventure.
12. I watch reality TV for the same reasons I watch non-reality TV: distraction and entertainment!
13. Almost all of the reality shows I watch are competitions of some kind. I guess they speak to my competitive side. I also like the insight into human nature they sometimes provide.
14. It's fun.
15. Information and ideas, mostly
16. Unpredictable entertainment, authentic emotions shown.
17. I love the strategy. It's also always different. Plus, it's nice to feel involved with a "community" of sorts a group of other people who also follow the series-long plot.
18. I prefer the competitive ones. I've always liked game shows, and these are "game shows on steroids". I like the long-term strategizing and find it fascinating (& entertaining) how often contestants seem to forget they're on a game show and start acting like their competitors are their BFF and get hurt or angry when that person has the nerve to try and win the game for themselves.
19. Because I like seeing how real people deal with real situations. When I watch scripted TV, the reason for everything is because "the writers wrote it that way."
20. Depends. Until Project Runway I watched as if they were accidents I couldn't tear my eyes away from. Since Project Runway I look for more substance, people creating things instead of bored assholes getting drunk on camera. But sometimes I can't resist watching for the cheese factor.
21. Compelling people and storylines.
22. Probably for the same reason I slow down to look at car accidents.
23. I enjoy watching the competition.
24. Love the music for the music programmes, and love the strategy and scenery for the other programmes.
25. Mindless fun.
26. That depends on the show. I watch survivor because I love to watch people scrambling to figure out both the social dynamic of a tribe, while trying to outplay others in physical I. Project runway is more to watch the 'personalities,' Dance for the dancing,

and what not to wear because I like the advice I can get when there is someone being fitted who has my body type

27. bored, lack of better shows

28. DRAMA

29. sick I guess...

30. Enjoy seeing what other people are doing with their life.

31. I like to see how other people live.

32. Its fun to see how real people react.

33. Its great.

34. the fun and games

35. I like to see how these average people react.

36. I watch The Amazing Race for the race; it's one of a kind and THE best so-called reality show. Survivor is interesting for the alliances made, and for the variety of challenges the contestants must compete in.

37. I enjoy these shows.

38. Most of what I watch I can learn from it. I prefer real people watching as opposed to watching actors.

39. I watch "Who Wants to be a Superhero?" because I'm a big geek who loves seeing the big geek validation. I watch "Top Chef" to get new ideas for dishes I can make myself.

40. Because sometimes it is just so outlandish that it is funny.

41. I enjoy knowing that real people are being depicted and real changes are happening to them

42. Academically, I like imagining what they think their target audience is, look at the editing choices they make and try to understand why, etc. Really, though, like other audience members I watch out of prurient curiosity, the "feel-good" story of transformation, the voyeurism, the desire for an "insider's" look at a field like fashion design or professional chefs, etc.

43. It's fun to choose who you want to win

44. Mostly to get ideas for my life (What not to wear, flip that house). Sometimes (Dog & Apprentice etc) to just be entertained.

45. Creativity of individual participants – designers, chefs, etc.

46. It is amusing, interesting, different, in front of me and like crack. Being a "Rear Window" kinda gal, I get a kick out of watching these people.

Entertaining

47. Because it is interesting to see how people react to challenges and solve them in creative ways.

48. I like competition and transformation shows. The transformation shows give me ideas for things I can do myself, and the competitions shows are like soap operas with interesting characters, funny, dramatic, and mostly with unexpected plots.

49. IT'S INTERESTING TO WATCH COMMUNICATION STYLES

50. fun

51. The drama – makes my life seem less complicated

52. Even though the situations aren't organic, I think the interaction of real people in those situations is interesting. I typically watch with my teenager, and the shows provoke discussion about appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

53. I watch this particular show to see the makeovers and because it is predictable and mindless.
54. Usually because of the content involved (clothing design, cooking, etc.) for the learning value.
55. most of the ones I watch are competitions because I like watching competitions or are about fashion or food...two things I really like.
56. I like game shows...I enjoy the competitive aspect. I especially watching people learn new things and improve their skills.
57. I only watch Survivor because I have been watching it since it started. I will not watch any other reality shows.
58. To see what talent & competition there is.
59. Usually because there is nothing else of interest programed against it.
60. It's interesting, unpredictable. You can sometime's see what's coming on a sitcom or drama show, but reality is totally unpredictable. It's also a reminder that we are all more alike than we are different.
61. I watch Top Chef because I'm a chef as well and am interested in seeing the food that's prepared.
62. It is interesting to see how people reaction to their situations.
63. I LOVE IT! I like to see what reaction people are going to have in different circumstances.
64. No particular reason. Either I like a show's content or not.
65. I only watch those that are non-humiliating
66. I enjoy watching interaction between people
67. Like to see what other people are doing to their homes, get ideas, I would rather read and don't want to get hooked on a specific show.
68. I have no idea. I guess to see what other people really do.
69. entertaining, not always expected
70. to see how people handle and deal with issues and their problems
71. Well, I don't watch very many of the reality programs, but I found Amazing Race to be entertaining.
72. not much else on
73. I enjoy the competions and I enjoy to watch these amazing singers become someone. With Survivor I enjoy the competions and too see how someone worked really hard and won a million dollars.
74. to get away from made up people and places on tv and relate to real people
75. It's interesting to watch other people and to see how they really are.
76. I love to watch people's personalities and talents. I love to watch how they interact with others and I love to watch them grow as performers especially I case of American Idol
77. too see what America thinks..I never Vote..
78. Survivor was intriguing from a political perspective. How did the contestants strategize, develop and break alliances and what approaches were most successful.
79. Entertainment
80. I don't
81. I find it amusing
82. I'll watch at a realty show if it is the only thing on and I need background TV noise.

83. At times it can be entertaining or informative. (The first few seasons of the Apprentice provided some information concerning business success.)

84. It is entertaining.

Question 13
Viewer Survey

There are many different types of reality television shows (e.g. talk shows, challenges shows, makeover shows, game shows). Do you think that some of these are more "real" than others? Why or why not?

1. Some shows seem more "real" than others because of the unpredictability.
2. Not necessarily-it depends on the specific show.
3. Yes, I do think some are more real than others. I think the challenge shows where there are tangible results are more real. Candid shows like The Real World seem to rely more on setting up situations to manufacture drama.
4. I think reality shows with a competitive element, such as Big Brother, are less real because people will have more reason to lie and act to win.
5. I don't know about different types of shows...but different specific shows seem more real than others. The Nanny deal with actual children, sometimes VERY small, who would not be able to follow a script, thus very real reactions.
6. Entertainment competition shows are 'real' in that the performances are what they appear to be, even if behind the scenes editing helps create 'characters'.
7. As for challenge/competition shows, I don't think any of them are 'real' in that all the situations are manufactured. However, I think The Amazing Race is the most real in terms of the people - in such a high-stress, high-speed environment, it's very difficult for the participants to spend much time concocting a 'character' or strategy, as the premise is pretty simple: last one there is out. Of these types of shows, I believe it is most likely to show 'real' reactions of people.
8. Makeover shows are probably the most accurate because the "storyline" is simple and direct. Competition shows are probably more real than shows like the real world, etc. because the producers can't edit out who won the challenge, who got voted out, etc., but like the real world they can manipulate the viewers' perspective on why the competition results happened as they did.
9. The non-competition shows (see: Extreme Makeover: Home Edition) are technically more "real", but you won't see any of this stuff in real life, so now.
10. I don't know. I think every reality show is altered and/or distorted in some way to achieve the dramatic effect the producers want. I think this is especially true for challenge shows.
11. yes, I think some shows are more heavily manipulated and edited to create/exaggerate storylines. Some shows try to generate much more drama. Game shows only let you see a "real person" being themselves for such a short time and under very limited circumstances. Dating (single episode shows) also seem to encourage exaggerated behaviors and conflict. Longer series shows such as Survivor or Big Brother or Starting Over seem more "real" only because you have more opportunities to see/film the contestants, but I believe they are also manipulated to create tension, conflict, and DRAMA for their story arcs.
12. I tend to prefer the competitive shows, so I guess I think they're "more real".

13. Yes, I think there is a lot of staging to get the right reality
14. I think shows on Food Network, TLC, and HGTV are more "real" than competitive reality shows. They are NOT real just use "regular" people.
15. No. The reactions of the participants, under pressure is real even if the situation is less or more unusual or out of the ordinary.
16. I think long-term investment shows are usually more "real." You can only keep your "game face" on for so long, I would imagine, before your guard slipped down and your true nature is revealed before the cameras.
17. I know there has to be editing to tell a coherent story in an hour, but I wonder how much, and how slanted editing is. I tend to think the amount of tinkering depends on the producer, not the genre. For example: reading live feed transcripts of Big Brother, and then watching the show based on that shows a lot of stuff that's never even alluded to, and a lot of stuff that might make certain contestants less likeable never see air. So if you see an ugly confrontation on the show, you know it was probably ten times worse in reality.
18. Shows where people co-exist and have natural interactions, no matter how contrived the circumstances that brought them together, are the most real kind of "reality TV" there is. Reality TV and documentaries are two different things. Shows like Extreme Makeover or whatever it's called (I don't watch it) basically have people telling the subject what they are doing next. The reaction to what is being done to them may be real, but there is not much genuine human interaction, decision-making, etc. Since the context of all of the above is completely contrived, no. But in the sense that some may demand more of a person, test them in some way that requires a "real" reaction, yes.
19. Obviously, the more editing that goes into a show, the higher the odds that it's being shaped or manipulated behind the scenes. Talk shows and shows like American Idol, which are often shown live or in close to real time, are less vulnerable to manipulative editing than shows like Survivor or Project Runway.
20. Yes, I think things like Supernanny are much more real than shows like Flavor of Love
21. I certainly think some are more "real" than others. I believe adversity reveals character. And when watching "reality TV" I like to root for "good people" who are competitive. It's best if the competition relies on intellect and physical ability rather than dumb luck.
22. I don't believe "make over shows" really give us a glimpse into the persons personality. I think we are manipulated to see the "ugly duckling" to "swan" transformation. I also think these shows lack the element of competition. So they people on the show don't EARN their reward. It's simply gifted to them. And while there's nothing wrong with that - It's not a program I care to invest time in.
23. I enjoy talk shows that are educational talk shows IE. Charlie Rose. But I don't enjoy Talk shows whose appeal is along the lines of a care wreck. ie. Springer. Some talk shows go to the lowest denominator such as Springer - others attempt to appear more highbrow like Oprah - but they are still mostly variations on "Look how bad my life is, won't you feel sorry for me." I've also heard 3rd hand that many of these shows are scripted - not by the shows, but by the people being interviewed. That is to say "hey let's tell the Springer show that blah blah blah, so we can get a free trip to California!"

But even if it were totally on the up and up? I have no interest in watchin people layout their dirty laundry in public.

24. Yes, because some have been set up so the structure is almost like a script.

25. They are all pretty much unreal

26. With survivor, I think certain things are "manufactured" in order to get certain reactions from people. With What Not To Wear, I think it's fairly "real" because most people don't understand what makes them look their best, and With SYTYCD, of course it's real, the dancers learn a different style of dance routine every week.

unsure

27. No, I think that they are all scripted. Maybe not some of the drama, but alot of it. People aren't as clever as they seem on tv.

28. no, I dont tend to make judgements about how "real" they are.

29. No, I think they are all 'real'.

30. Yes. Some seem scripted while others do not.

31. No, they are all real people participating in a contest.

32. All real. There is no script for the outcomes.

33. yes some are more than others. It all depends on what they are.

34. I fear that some "reality" TV show are becoming somewhat scripted.

35. None of the shows are "real" though The Amazing Race comes the closest in my opinion. At least it was in the beginning before more models/actors/beauty contestants/wrestlers, etc. were cast. I want more REAL people who are like the guy and gal next door; real people who are not looking for a job in the entertainment industry.

36. unsure

37. Yes, I feel if it is the kind that is to exploit people negatively, then it is more canned.

38. Shows dealing with medical miracles, life in the ER, crime solving, I believe are more "real".

39. Nope. They're all staged, written, and produced for a particular intent.

40. hmmm... I don't really have any thoughts on this one.

41. No

42. Well, it all comes down to how you define "real." I think generally the outcomes of competitive and makeover shows are as we see them. The editing makes a huge difference in how we perceive the players and the "story," however, so in that sense they're no more "real" than other types of shows.

43. I've only watched challenge shows. Have no idea what the others are like.

44. Yes, some have very contrived circumstances, and others are completely the result of editing. But the end results can be very real & I expect life changing.

45. I suspect that most of these are not really "reality" but have been heavily edited to accommodate television audiences.

46. Well, game shows are on a soundstage, but Big Brother pretty much is, as well. Different is the operative word, here. All of these people have to follow instructions and rules with regard to participation.

47. yes. Those that know they are being videotaped may be more entertaining in a way they wouldn't be in real life.

48. I don't know. The reactions on the game shows and makeover shows may be more authentic. The challenge shows may feature people with certain expertise who may

have an advantage over others, and I think these tend to be a bit more scripted to provide a story line.

49. It varies from show to show, not necessarily by genre. It really depends on the production and editing team for that particular show - some manipulate footage and stage interviews more, some do it less. Live competition shows are probably the most "real."

50. NO, IT IS AMUSING TO PEOPLE WHO WORK TRADITIONAL HOURS, THE SHOWS ARE USUALLY ON IN THE EVENING...MAKES IT MORE ACCESSIBLE.

51. no opinion

52. challenge shows are more real since

53. Yes, because the show is less invested in getting a "story arc" from its participants. I suppose makeover shows could be more 'real' than others – of course depending on how the show is structured. In the case of 'What Not to Wear', participants can at least take the haircut, makeup tips and clothes they bought back to use in their normal life. However, I am sure participant reactions and impressions are probably creatively edited, so there is always a level of unreality. Challenge reality shows seem the least real. They do have to increase the shock value of what the participants do to keep people watching. And I believe the longer they have participants in an ongoing series of episodes, the more staged it has to be. For example, everyone knows there will be an ongoing villain to hate that won't be eliminated until the end of the show because he or she keeps people watching.

54. Challenge and Makeover shows are "real" than others, in my opinion.
not really.

55. They all have an element of reality, but the level of that reality is very dependent on the choices made by the show's producers.

56. Yes, some live shows are closer to reality than edited shows shown months later.

57. Yes. On American Idol you can either sing or not. On some of these Bachelor/Bachelorette type shows, I think most people are putting on an act in order to win.

58. Talk shows are more 'real' as opposed to contrived 'games' that so many other shows make people do.

59. Yes. For example, on Dr 90210, those are real people having real surgery. I don't see how that could be scripted. But other shows that are like contests, I think might be scripted, even just a little bit.

60. I believe the game shows would be the most "real" ie, the least contrived or "set up."

61. I doubt it-They are in a new situation that is not for ever and most like totally different from their "real" life.

62. Yes. Some shows you can't predict what the participants will say or do. Sometimes the editing of the shows makes things slanted one way or the other.

63. For me it is not a matter of how "real" it is, but what is real for me. I don't care for shows with a lot of backbiting and conflict or where people are doing some super human feats. I also particularly dislike dating/mating shows. I like the day-to-day things like What Not to Wear, shows that give people an opportunity to improve themselves and/or their lives.

64. I never considered talk shows or game shows reality TV these to me are real shows but not "reality" The make over shows, challenge shows those are what I consider reality shows and most of them are bad.
65. I think all shows are somewhat fake. Certain shows like some game shows are more real because contestants are randomly chosen like on Price is Right
66. Yes some are more real. Somethings are Just all around phony as in celebrity reality makeover shows are somewhat less phony
67. No, I think they are about the same. All shows have stuff thats a little out there for there ratings.
68. makeover shows might be more real, some challenge shows, but who knows, we only see a small amount of what is actually filmed...
69. yes, some are more true to life than others for example extreme makeover we see how the people look before and after
70. Yes. Some shows are more complicated than others and require more "prep" for the participants and are taped over a longer period. These shows probably have more retakes and edits. I would imagine that a game show, for example, would show the real reactions of the participants because they wouldn't be as likely to do it over.
71. it's all for entertainment purposes
72. Yes, the Make over ones are very much real as the other ones you can tell have some addes pieces to make them look better.some are to phony to know they are real.
73. absolutely. first of all reality shows with celebrities are not true reality shows because they usually have creative control on what is shown. no-name people tend to be more real and their flaws are exposed on tv.
74. There are enoughed stage things in all of these shows. You could never really have a total reality show.
75. I like the Home Make over shows..on TLC..I like to see the befores and afters..But in reality..More people than they show are helping behind the scenes..So it would normally take more time and people to complete a project..than what they say is happening.
76. Not necessarily.
77. Talk shows and game shows are more controlled, I define reality shows as the challenge shows
78. The makeover shows and game shows are, I think, more real, because of laws enacted when fraud was perpetrated on past game shows.
79. Most of us with any brains know that they aren't "real" - an awful lot of editing is done to make things appear 1 way when in actuality it is completely different
80. No. I believe most, if not all, realty shows of any type are scripted.
81. Home improvement shows seem more real than other shows.
82. I think they are all equally real/non real. they all have editors and producer and even writers who can shape the presentation, yet they all have a certain trainwrecky quality of never knowing who is going to do poorly or flip out on camera

REFERENCES

- Andrejevic, M. (2004). *Reality TV: The work of being watched*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers .
- Andriacco, D. (2003). *Taming the media monster: A family guide to television, internet, and all the rest*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press.
- Ayres, C. (2006, January 14). Truth or dare – Up front [Electronic version]. *The Times*. Books 6.
- Balkin, K. F. (Ed.). (2004). *At issue: Reality TV*. San Diego : Greenhaven Press.
- Bauder, D. (2006, January 22). 'Survivor' producers agreed to pay Hatch's taxes to keep lid on cheating [Electronic version]. *The Hays Daily News*, 015.
- Brenton, S. & Cohen, R. (2003). *Shooting people: Adventures in reality TV*. London: Verso.
- Carey, B. (2006, August 22). The fame motive [Electronic version]. *The New York Times*, F1(L).
- Carey, J. W. (Ed.). (1988). *Media, myths, and narratives: Television and the press*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Census.gov (2001). 50th anniversary of wonderful world of color TV. Retrieved March 2, 2007 from http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features/001702.html
- Coles, R. (1997). *Doing documentary work*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cunningham, L. (1995). *Talking politics: Choosing the president in the television age*. London: Praeger Publishers.
- Delisle, J. B. (2003). *Surviving American cultural imperialism: Survivor and traditions of*

- nineteenth-century colonial fiction. *The Journal of American Culture*, 26(1), 42-55.
- de Moraes, L. (2006, February 10). "Idol" worshippers turn Grammys into a b-side [Electronic version]. *Washington Post*, C07.
- Dewey, J. (1891). *Psychology*. New York: American Book Company.
- D'sa, B. (2005). Social studies in the dark: Using docudramas to teach history. *The Social Studies*, January/February 2005, 9-13.
- Gillespie, T. (2000). Narrative control and visual polysemy : Fox surveillance specials and the limits of legitimation. *The Velvet Light Tap*, 45, 36-49.
- Good, H. (Ed.). (2003). *Desperately seeking ethics: A guide to media conduct*. Lanham: The Scarecrow Press.
- Goodridge, M. (2002, December). From Osbournes drama to dyke drama. *The Advocate*, 58-59.
- Grace, N. (2005). *Objection: How high-priced defense attorneys, celebrity defendants, and a 24/7 media have hijacked our criminal justice system*. New York: Hyperion.
- Hayes, R. (1993). Measurement of information. *Information Processing & Management*, 29(1), 1-11.
- Jacobs, L. (1971). *The documentary tradition: From Nanook to Woodstock*. New York: Hopkinson and Blake.
- Jagodozinki, J. (2003). The perversity of (real)ity TV: A symptom of our times. *Journal for the Psychoanalysis of Culture & Society*, 8(2), 320-329.
- Korbelik, J. (2004, November 21). Reality check for reality TV [Electronic version]. *Lincoln Journal Star*, 01-02.

- Kushman, R. (2002, June 24). Sorority, lies, & videotape: MTV's look at UC Davis shoes the unreality of reality TV [Electronic version]. *The Sacramento Bee*, E1.
- Levin, B. (2005). American High: Documentary as episodic television. In A. Rosenthal (ed.), *New Challenges for Documentary*. (pp. 327-341). Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Little Oxford English Dictionary*. (2006). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Madsen, R. P. (1973). *The impact of film: How ideas are communicated through cinema and television*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co.
- Mayer, J. (2007, February 19). Letter from Hollywood: Whatever it takes. *The New Yorker*, 66.
- McDonald, G. (1942). *Educational motion pictures and libraries*. Chicago: American Library Association.
- Moore, J. (2006, January 25). A new reality TV show asked for contestants who were willing to conceive a baby with a stranger live on air – opinion [Electronic version]. *The Sun*, 11.
- Mumby (1993). *Narrative and social control: Critical perspectives*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Murray, S. & Ouellette, L. (2004). *Reality TV: Remaking television culture*. New York: New York University Press.
- O'Connor, B.C. (1986). Representation and the utility of moving image documents. *Proceedings of the 1986 ASIS Annual Meeting*. Washington, DC: American Society for Information Science.
- O'Connor, B.C. (1996). *Explorations in indexing and abstracting: Pointing, virtue, and*

- power. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, Inc.
- O'Connor, B.C. (2001, March 24). Lecture Notes. University of North Texas, 1.
- O'Connor, B.C. & Copeland J.H. (2003). *Hunting and gathering on the information savanna: Conversations on modeling human search abilities*. Lanham: Scarecrow Press.
- Pauwels, L. (2006). *Visual cultures of science: Rethinking representational practices in knowledge building and science communication*. Hanover, New Hampshire: Dartmouth College Press.
- Pieto, R. & Otter, K. (2007). The Osbournes': Genre, reality TV, and the domestication of rock 'n roll, Counterblast.org. Retrieved February 26, 2007 from <http://www.nyu.edu/pubs/counterblast/osbournes.htm>
- Poague, G. (2006, January 22). What's going on. *The Leaf-Chronicle*, 11A.
- Poniewozik, J. (2006, February 6). How reality TV fakes it. *Time*, 60-62.
- Poniewozik, P. (2003, February 17). Why Reality TV is Good for Us. *Time*, 65-67.
- Reality television. (n.d.) *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. Retrieved February 27, 2007, from Reference.com.
- Reiss, S. & Wiltz, J. (2001). Why America Loves Reality TV. *Psychology Today*, 34, 52.
- Roman, J. (2005). *From daytime to primetime: The history of American television programs*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Rosenberg, H. (2004). *Not so prime time: Chasing the trivial on American television*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee.
- Rosenthal, A. (1995). *Writing docudrama : Dramatizing reality for film and TV*. Newton, MA: Focal Press.

- Rushdie, S. (2001, June 9). Reality TV: A dearth of talent and the death of morality [Electronic version]. *The Guardian*, 12.
- Schonlau, Fricker, & Elliott (2002). *Conducting research surveys via e-mail and the web*. Santa Monica: Rand.
- Shouse, B. (2001). Reality TV puts group behavior to the test. *Science*, 294 (5545).
- Steinberg, J. (2005, March 21). TV wives' tales: Participants in 'swap' show get reality check [Electronic version]. *Watertown Daily Times*, B1.
- Steinberg, J. (2006, January 21). Television cul-de-sac mystery: Why was reality show killed [Electronic version]. *The New York Times*, A1(L).
- Tremblay, T. (2003). Reading the "real" in Survivor: Unearthing the republican roots in reality narrative. *Topia*, 9.
- Valenti, F. M. (2000). *More than a movie: Ethics in entertainment*. Boulder : Westview Press.
- Wilson, P. (1983). *Second-hand knowledge: an inquiry into cognitive authority*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press.